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ELDMUIR  
An Art-Story  
of  
*Scottish Home Life*  
*Scenery and Incident*













# ELDMUIR :

AN

Art-Story

OF

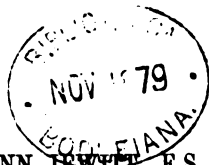
SCOTTISH HOME-LIFE, SCENERY,  
AND INCIDENT.

By JACOB THOMPSON, JUNIOR.

ILLUSTRATED WITH ENGRAVINGS AFTER PAINTINGS OF  
JACOB THOMPSON.

WITH

AN INTRODUCTORY NOTICE BY LLEWELLYNN JEWETT, F.S.A.,  
&c., &c., &c.



London :

SAMPSON LOW, MARSTON, SEARLE, & RIVINGTON,  
CROWN BUILDINGS, 188, FLEET STREET.  
1879.

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251. a. 75.



"O thou sculptor, painter, poet !  
Take this lesson to thy heart :  
That is best which lieth nearest ;  
Shape from that thy work of Art."

H. W. LONGFELLOW.





WM. BALINGALL.

*THE HERMITAGE.*

JACOB THOMPSON.

## INTRODUCTION.

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THE story of "Eldmuir," to which it is my privilege to prefix these few lines of Introduction, is its Author's first literary venture, and as such is put forth by him with a becoming and characteristic diffidence.

Son of one of the most gifted and successful of our English painters—Jacob Thompson, whose "Ferry Boat," "Highland Bride's Departure," "Rush Bearing," "Vintage," "Annunciation," "Agony in the Garden," "Galatea," "Proserpine," and other pictures, are among the highest achievements of the British School of Painting—the Author's aim has been to so connect together such of these grand conceptions as more especially illustrate Scottish life and scenery, that they shall form a series of pictorial episodes in a narrative of the actual home-life of the people among whom he has moved, and the story of whose lives he has studied. Thus he has endeavoured to carry the mind of the reader through all the various incidents so charmingly depicted on canvas, and to make him feel as though, while he was breathing the pure mountain air, he was literally drinking in the full, rich mellowness of atmospheric

effects, revelling in the glow of colour, and entering heartily into all the minutiae of accessories of heath and lake, mountain and holm.

This self-imposed task he has lovingly performed, and has succeeded in presenting in the following pages such a well-thought-out and purely homely narrative of peasant-life in the Highlands, as was best suited to his purpose.

The grand conceptions of the painter, and the narrative by which the son has so pleasantly bound them together, have had their birth and common origin in the same family, and in the same "home," and will thus remain indissolubly united. The "home" to which I have alluded is "The Hermitage" at Hackthorpe, in Westmoreland, where, for close upon forty years, Jacob Thompson has resided, and from which quiet retreat have emanated those superb creations of art that have been the admiration of all to whom they are known. In this quiet, unpretentious, and secluded spot,—“far removed from noise and smoke,” and the bustle of town life, and surrounded by some of nature’s grandest and wildest scenes of mountain, lake, and moor—fit home for an artist whose mind is properly attuned to a full appreciation of the loveliness and beauty of the scenes so lavishly spread out before him—the artist has resided, and given to the world the results of his incessant labours. With every sense keenly alive to the wondrous gradations of light and colour and shade, and the momentary atmospheric changes that come over the landscape to illumine, darken, or render transparent its various features, and then, as they pass away for ever, to be succeeded by other changes equally ethereal, but only to be fully appre-



ciated by one whose calling is literally to store the mind with the poetry of art, and to embody and give it permanence on canvas, he has made this pleasant retreat a true "home of art," and within its walls has re-created on his easel the most glorious of these effects as accompaniments to groupings his genius has called into existence. In this "home," too, "Eldmuir" has been written, and thus literature and art have been happily wedded within its walls.

As a tale of every-day Scottish life, simply told in language eminently in keeping with the homely character of the people who are portrayed, and with their manners, customs, habits, modes of life, and sentiments, the story has merits far beyond what could be attained by a higher, more flowery, or more ambitious style of writing.

The story, as I have shown, has a twofold mission to fulfil. These are the linking together of some few of the creations of the painter by means of a pleasant and appropriate narrative; and the giving to the world, with their all-important aid, a word-picture—drawn with pre-Raphaelite nicety and minuteness—of simple home-life, with its attendant changes, vicissitudes, and trials.

The engravings which form so important a feature in the volume have all been drawn on the wood by the painter himself, and engraved under his personal supervision, by an accomplished artist. They are, therefore, literally the work of Mr. Thompson's own hand, and as such, possess a vastly increased amount of interest.

LLEWELLYNN JEWITT.

*Winster Hall, Derbyshire.*



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# ELDMUIR.

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## CHAPTER I.

“All are scattered now and fled,  
Some are married, some are dead;  
And when I ask, with throbs of pain,  
‘Ah! when shall they all meet again!’  
As in the days long since gone by,  
The ancient timepiece makes reply,—  
‘For ever—Never!  
Never—For ever!’”

H. W. LONGFELLOW.

HALF a century or more ago, the time at which our story opens, how different were the habits of the people, their modes of conveyance, their means of holding intercourse with each other, and their general surroundings, from what they now are! Nay, not only so, but how different was then the face of the country itself from what we see it now in our own day! Localities that in the beginning of the present century were almost impenetrable passes, trackless wastes, or dangerous morasses—where man never trod, cultivation was as yet unknown, and civilization held no sway—have been converted into hives of busy industry, covered by innumerable lines of railway, and thrown open to the admiring gaze of a world of tourists, whose very existence, as a class, has been created by these modern facilities for travelling. In those days of the past generation, the lovely mountain

solitudes, the romantic glens, and the secluded lakes of the Western Highlands of Scotland formed a region almost unknown to dwellers in the south, and the wildness and grandeur of many of what are now the most favoured of all resorts, rested in all their virgin purity, untouched and unsoiled by man and his ever-encroaching works.

Visited occasionally by enthusiasts in Art, who wandered there in search of the wildly picturesque as subjects for the pencil, and to study in the school of stern nature herself, her choicest phases of beauty, and her most changing effects of light and shade and colour ; or by here and there one of the "upper ten thousand," who came either as a guest, or tenant of shooting grounds, of the Highland chieftain to search for game, they were unknown to the world at large, and their beauties remained almost unexplored by any but the sparse population of the native and hardy Scotch.

In those days, along the main roads, the cheerful notes of the mail guard's horn resounded through the avenues of stately trees by which they were bounded, while the coaches themselves passed on their way, pursuing their tedious journey through pleasant woodland scenes, amid sunny corn-fields, over heath-clad moors, or round the bases of bleak mountains, and drew up at quaint old village inns with latticed casements, and grotesque sign-boards swinging above the doors.

Those days are long since past and gone! They have no place in the memory of the generation now rising around us; and there seems to be, as it were, a great gulf between that time and the present. On the further side of that gulf, ere the mail coaches had ceased to run, or the iron horse, with rapidly-transforming power, had started on its eventful career, the actors in this "over-true

tale" lived out their little lives, and have long since rested from their labours.

Long ago, by the side of a bay on the west coast of Scotland, stood the hamlet of Eldmuir. It was tenanted only by a few poor fishermen, and one or two farmers who held a few acres of land, reared some cattle and sheep, and thus contrived to eke out a precarious existence. Few were their wants, fewer their temptations, and they were happy enough; their lives, indeed, presented but little of what a more cultured race would call enjoyment, but it was all the life they knew or cared for. They laughed, they sang, they danced as merrily as their betters. Nature supplied them with a goodly share of sunshine and wild flowers, and decked their quiet glens with a beauty never found in crowded cities. Their cows supplied them with the richest milk; their bees gathered for them the sweetest honey; and although the cottage walls were rudely built, and their roofs thatched in the most primitive fashion, cosy firesides glowed within, and a kind heaven shed over them her choicest blessing of contentment.

Eldmuir is now a place of the past, and even its site is not marked on any map of the country. Should the curious traveller search throughout the longest hours of a summer day for the scene of this story, he would find remaining of the once pleasant village but a few scattered stones and ruinous enclosures to tell their tale of past occupation; while the kirk where once they worshipped and the grave-yard in which the "rude forefathers of the hamlet sleep" in peace are desecrated—the one now roofless, and its very foundations crumbling; the other overgrown with ferns and grasses and ranker weeds, till its very boundaries are obliterated and its graves made desolate. No stones remain to tell

the story of their lives ; and even the place where the dust of generations is quietly resting, is so hidden by wild flowers and heather as not to be discernible. Here undisturbed the moor fowl now build their nests, and the deer, conscious of security, come down at sunset to drink from the spring where once comely Highland lasses filled their pitchers, and beside whose shady brink the old people were wont to meet, and, in the gloamings, gossip of other days.

All are now gone, scattered, after the storm of life, like autumn's leaves dispersed by the passing tempest. Some rest in far away kirkyards ; while others, settled in cities of their own land, or in far-off countries beyond the sea, have become aliens to the land of their birth, and the place where they once lived knows them no more—All are gone ; and the ruined walls scarce cast a shadow over the cold and deserted hearth-stones.

Solitude and silence reign all around, save in autumn, when the wealthy owners of the now depopulated and deserted region seek the red deer in his lair, perchance on the very spot where flourished long ago some “puir body's” kail-yard, and the “deserted village,” in very mockery of its loneliness and desolation, becomes alive again with sound of voice.

At the time when our story opens—some seventy years ago—Eldmuir was a pleasant, quiet little village, possessing its own kirk, manse, and mill. Beautifully situated at the foot of a wild glen, with an opening towards the sea, and watered by a mountain stream, which, in the course of its descent, formed a succession of pools and eddying cascades, it was surely one of Nature's loveliest spots, and most primitive and charming of rendezvous. Dotted about on its banks stood the thatched cottages of the inhabitants, foremost amongst

which was the two-storied, grey-stone manse of the worthy minister, David Spey, which, standing near a bend of the stream higher up in the glen than the last cottage, and midway between it and the mill, commanded a lovely view of the entire village and of the sea beyond. Behind the house the mountain rose so abruptly as to allow only a narrow strip of land to be used as a kail-yard. This, little as it was, however, amply sufficed for the modest requirements of the minister's family, whose "wants were small," and their fare frugal in the extreme. A small pent-house, reared against the wall, afforded shelter to the fowls, which he tended, and to the ducks, who wended their way morning and evening to revel in the pool or natural dam in the burn below the dwelling. In front a plot of ground served the minister for a flower-garden, in the cultivation and tending of which he found that healthful exercise and recreation that became a solace when troubles assailed him, and a relief from the monotony of the studies he yet assiduously pursued. Over the front door were two holly-bushes, whose branches, closely intermingled and entwined, formed a natural porch, under whose shade the minister and his sister Barbara accustomed themselves to sit at eventide; and here, while surveying their tiny domain, and watching the setting of the sun over the sea, they wished for no better lot till the time should come when they would exchange that mortal home for an imperishable habitation in the realms of bliss. The serenity that often succeeds a great sorrow seemed to have gathered almost imperceptibly around the thoughts and actions of these two, and, though slowly descending into the vale of years, no evening shade had yet obscured the brightness, the purity, the beauty, and the holiness of their lives. As through the little windows of the

manse came daily the gladdening rays of sunshine, so these fell constantly upon their hearts, and reflected themselves on their whole lives and surroundings in bright gleams of heaven's own peace.

The keeping-room, although its floor was strewn with rushes, contained many quaint articles of luxury, or what, in their simplicity, they esteemed so; and the minister's books—solid-looking theological tomes, classical authors, black-letter commentaries, and others—occupied one end of the apartment, where they were carefully put away on open shelves almost as dark as the binding of the volumes they supported.

On one side the fireplace stood David's easy chair, while another, with tall, straight back and twisted legs, was placed opposite for Mrs. Barbara, who, when household work was done and she had leisure, sat with her knitting and her cat, to keep her brother company in his studies.

Over the low mantel-shelf was suspended an old Highland target, and behind it were placed two rusty claymores, which, could they have spoken, might have told of brave historic and heroic deeds done by hands by whom they had been wielded in "auld lang syne." Having done good service in the memorable campaign of '45, when they had crossed the border, and lain all night clasped in the cold hands of their fallen owners, who had breathed out the last sigh of the leal and true in Charles's fatal cause on Clifton Moor, they were honoured as priceless treasures by their present owners. Two or three old pictures, darkened with age, hung upon the walls, and beneath the target were suspended some strings of eggs and hazel-nuts; while a couple of samplers, recalling a once happy era in the minister's bygone days, were carefully framed and preserved.

The life of this now infirm and white-haired man had not in its time been altogether devoid of romance; but it was the romance of poverty, of faithfulness, of love, of purity, and of silent hopefulness. When but a youth, and filled with the aspirations of that hopeful time, he and his "gentle Alice" had loved with that deep affection that neither absence nor time can efface. Long and patiently as she had waited for him, her love had never faltered. Her earnest affection had not once changed, and through the many years of "hope deferred" through which they had passed, her devotion seemed to grow stronger and more enduring, until at length she came to consider herself almost a part of her "Davie." Sharing in all his plans, assisting in his airy castle-building, and whispering comforting words that cheered and sustained him when almost prostrate beneath the dispiriting effects of defeat, Alice looked onward with him and for him to the brightness that was to come, but which was so long in coming. Thus she encouraged, aided—ay, and even supported—him she loved through years of struggling and striving, which were rendered more poignant as well as protracted by college promotion over his head to less worthy aspirants.

Thus they waited until the glow of their first brilliant expectations had paled into those moderate and humble desires which at length were realized in the little manse and slender stipend of the living of Eldmuir. Small as was the income, to them it was all and all, for they felt that the life they had so long lived apart could now be shared with each other, and that the union of hearts which had so long existed, could now be rendered close and lasting in the holy bands of wedlock. Marrying quietly, and leaving, without regret, the busy, restless city, the happy pair had departed, satisfied and contented,



to their secluded home. In their future, the clamour of human traffic was to be exchanged for the humming of bees amid the flowers; the clang of town noises for the singing of the brook below the garden, and the weariness of "hope deferred," for the softening and soothing influence of the distant murmur of the waterfall by the mill-dam. The peat "reek," as it ascended in a slender blue column from their chimney, did not even dim the brightness of the summer sky; the very flowers seemed made for them; all nature seemed joyous on their account, and the peaceful villagers greeting them respectfully as they passed, added to their happiness and satisfaction. Life was indeed almost like a new and better childhood to the now middle-aged couple, who were for the first time entering on a new state of existence and on a new phase of usefulness. Perhaps it was this feeling which, when seated in the garden, clasping each other's hand, on the first evening spent in their new home, led them to sing in concert a hopeful hymn, learned together at the old dame's school in their native village, and until now nearly forgotten; perhaps, too, it was this feeling that caused them, with still clasped hands, to render thanks together to the God of heaven for having, in His own good time, granted their life-long prayer.

Thus passed ten happy years, and two flaxen-haired, blue-eyed girls playing merrily in the garden, or building houses of pebbles by the brook side, gladdened the hearts of their parents who lived again the "sunny hours of childhood" in the joyous gambols of their pets. Their little hands had learned to work the samplers now hanging above the chimney-piece; and they had sought and strung together the eggs and hazel-nuts still suspended there. Theirs was indeed a childhood full of

promise, but, alas ! never to be fulfilled. One disastrous summer saw them both laid beneath the hawthorn-tree, from which they had often gathered the white blossoms on Sabbath mornings, and just one year afterwards she who had borne so much and so patiently, followed these pledges of her long love into the silent land.

For a considerable time after this threefold blow David seemed almost overwhelmed by the succession of calamities that had befallen him and his happy home, and his health visibly suffered. At length, happily, his widowed and childless elder sister, Barbara, came to reside with him, and her sisterly love and solicitude, in the course of time, gradually healed the wound he had so keenly felt, while his affections, so rudely severed in this life, learned to centre themselves peacefully on the hope of a happy reunion in the life to come.

At the time of his introduction to the reader the minister was about sixty years of age ; but sorrow and studious habits, with a peculiar stoop in his gait, gave him a much older appearance. His broad and massy features were unmistakably Scottish, and were rendered more impressive by the long white hair which streamed over his shoulders. To a superficial observer David Spey's countenance bore an impress of severity ; but a truer student of physiognomy could not fail to read, in the kindly light of those quiet eyes, the secret of " peace and good-will to all " that lit them from within. As a man and as a minister he was much beloved by all whom he knew, or over whom he exercised spiritual supervision, and his sermons were pronounced by the elders to be " sound in doctrine and varra strengthening ; " and though the younger members of the congregation, longing to be out on the sunny brae-side, where they could flaunt their Sunday kirtles to greater advantage,

*did* whisper to each other that they were a “deal ower lang,” no one, either old or young, was ever known to speak in earnest a disparaging word against their revered “Minister Davie,” for by this title he had become universally known. Such, then, was David Spey, the man whose moral, pure, genial, and loving influence exercised such a controlling and guiding power for good over the fortunes and characters of many with whom the reader will become acquainted in the course of this simple narrative—an influence that proved a lasting blessing to them in after-days, through the many trials and vicissitudes to which they were subjected in the pilgrimage of their lives.

## CHAPTER II.

“Three years she grew in sun and shower,  
Then Nature said, ‘A lovelier flower  
On earth was never sown ;  
This child I to myself will take ;  
She shall be mine, and I will make  
A lady of my own.’”

WORDSWORTH.

THE nearest cottage to the manse was occupied by a widow named Elspeth McGregor, but who was generally known to her neighbours simply as “Auld Elspeth,” and whose husband, a small farmer, had died some years before, leaving her with an only daughter, Jean, who was universally acknowledged to be the belle of the country side.

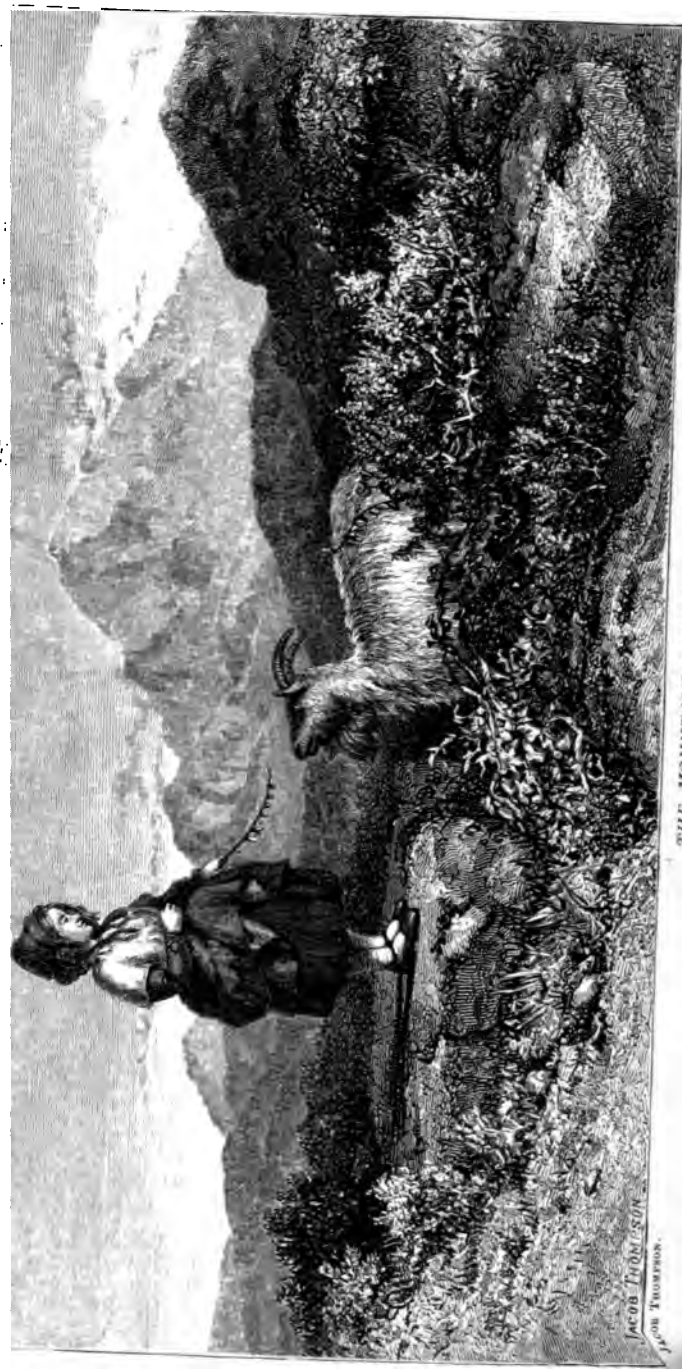
Elspeth McGregor was one of those wise women, now seldom met with, to whom was tacitly accorded, not only the respect due to age and experience, but the reverence felt for skill in preparations of medicines from herbs, and an almost awe for one so well versed as she in superstitions, and signs, omens, and charms.

Elspeth possessed the rare faculty of relating with the vigour given by her own belief, and with genuine humour and emphasis, stories bordering on the marvellous. Fairies, witches, warlocks, dwarfs, and hobgoblins were to her as much real and natural personages as were the neighbours among whom she dwelt. She held a firm belief in certain days and certain actions being unlucky, and a violation

of these by any of her friends or neighbours, gave her much disquiet. In dreams and omens she had implicit faith, and was wont to relate one that had occurred to herself, with an earnestness which assured all who heard her, that she was thoroughly convinced of its truth. One churning day, as she used to relate, she had carefully put away all her butter, with sprigs of rowan or mountain-ash round the platter (which, it is notorious, the fairies cannot bear), but altogether and very thoughtlessly forgot to leave out a small pat for "Nip," a wandering sprite, who was fond of dairy produce, and was supposed to visit the house on these occasions. That night she dreamed that an ugly, misshapen creature was flying away with the horse-shoe nailed as a protection from evil spirits on the cow-house door. Next morning "as sure as death," she found that the horse-shoe was gone, and to add to ill-luck, her best cow sickened and died that same day! Mistress Barbara, who had lately come to the manse and was not imbued with superstitious and old-world stories, vigorously combatted these beliefs in evil spirits, and in this case tried to prove to Elspeth that the cow had died through eating from the yew-tree whose branches drooped over the kirk-yard wall, which it had been seen to do by some of the neighbours; but Elspeth stubbornly contended that it was the "ticements" of the elf that had lured her cow there, and induced it to eat the poisonous foliage.

Jean, the high-spirited, handsome, and somewhat undisciplined daughter of Elspeth, was too wilful to settle at home, and more enjoyed the delight of taking solitary rambles over the fells, than of rendering to her mother any necessary assistance in her domestic occupations.

During their and her young life, the minister's children had been her most cherished playmates. Their sudden



THE MOUNTAIN KIMBLER

W. W. BARNARD.

JACOB THOMSON.  
FROM THOMPSON.



death had a subduing and chastening influence upon her which was much deepened on the rapidly succeeding loss of their mother—her kind friend—the minister's wife.

On her arrival at Eldmuir, Mrs. Barbara found that the girl had for several months become almost a stranger at the manse; that she was gradually relapsing into her former desultory habits, and, as a consequence, becoming discontented with the seclusion of her native place. Now, if there was one thing more than another upon which Mistress Barbara prided herself, it was her skill in female education, and she at once discovered in the person of Jean McGregor a noble field for her endeavours.

At first the girl was rather afraid of the precise, methodical person who now took the place of gentle and yielding Mrs. Spey, but after a week of occasional intercourse her opinion altered, and she became warmly attached to her future instructress, entering quickly and energetically into her views. Jean could already read and write, and was fast becoming a willing and delighted scholar. She had learned those accomplishments from Alister McCrae, an old man who, though originally a cobbler by trade, at that time earned his living by making and mending fishing-nets, and acting the part of Dominie to the boys and girls of the village.

"Auld Alister," as the dominie was called, though not yet fifty years of age, was venerable in appearance, and carried with him an air of superiority which gave dignity to his calling. Teaching both Gaelic and English—the latter he had learned when at a grammar-school in Inverary—he was also credited with understanding Latin, but, beyond occasionally using an odd phrase or two culled from the grammar, he never showed any familiarity with the ancient tongue, and was at all times reluctant to display his knowledge before the minister.



His aim soared no higher than that of enabling his pupils to read the Scriptures, to write a round, formal hand, and to know the first four rules of arithmetic; but even these rudiments were often denied to the boys, through their being required to labour at so early an age that they could not fully profit by the dominie's instructions.

Alistair McCrae, who had more than once visited Edinburgh, and who it was rumoured had on one occasion even shaken hands with the Provost, was a man of great authority amongst the villagers, and was consulted by them upon all important matters occurring in the uneventful routine of their simple lives. Alistair, being fond of music, would frequently remove the chanter from his old pipes that hung above the dresser and sit for hours on the brae-side playing his old-time reels and strathspeys, which recalled bygone friendships and days long past. Here groups of villagers returning from the hills with large bundles of heather, and, attracted by the music, would congregate around, while toddling "wee" things, whose mothers he had known as children, capered around and received their first lessons in dancing.

Occasionally receiving a newspaper from his friends in Inverary, Alistair would, on its receipt, assemble his neighbours together and read to the circle of deeply interested listeners the stories of Wellington's career in Spain, not failing to intersperse them with "wise-like" comments, which grew more emphatic whenever the doings of the Highland regiments were honourably mentioned. On these momentous occasions "Auld Alistair" took his seat on a moss-covered stone of immense size, which village tradition held to have been "put" there by a far back but renowned namesake of his own, one Alistair McCrae, in a trial of strength with "the deil," and which no one had ever been able to move "syn syne."



FIRST LESSON IN PAVING.



When the shadows of the mountains crept over the village, and the last gleams of the fast departing sun lingered on their highest peaks ; when the stars peeped out one by one, and it became too dark to read, Alistair, blessed with a retentive memory, would recapitulate the news to those whose occupations had prevented their earlier coming. Now and then these readings and recapitulations extended far into the night, until many a "gude wife's" fire went out, and the excited hearers returned home to sup on "cauld kail."

Alistair had been very successful in imparting the first rudiments of education to the mind of Jean, and mistress Barbara was well pleased to find the girl had made so much progress. She discovered that Jean possessed considerable ability, and was imbued with a laudable ambition of improving herself both in learning and in all the qualities necessary to make herself a good housewife. Gladly indeed would she have spent the whole of her time at the manse, but Mistress Barbara induced her to set apart a portion of each day for assisting her mother in the distillation of herbs, from whose sale she eked out the scanty income derived from the produce of her only remaining cow, her poultry, and her kail-yard, and thus she gained knowledge of domestic life and occupations that were of permanent value to her in after-time.

Four years after Barbara's arrival Jean had developed from the giddy, uncultured lass of seventeen into a staid and sober-minded woman. Ere this time, however, had arrived there had stolen into the maiden's life a gleam of romance, for she had learned to love.

Duncan Campbell, the object of her attachment, was a warm-hearted young Highlander, who possessed not only the qualifications of a handsome person and winning manners, but bore such a character for honesty and ster-

ling worth, that seemed eminently fitted to make him a good husband. Duncan was the younger of the two sons of Fergus Campbell, the miller, who, with his wife Janet, resided in a white cottage, the "Mill-house" as it was called, at the head of the glen, and he and Jean were accustomed to meet, whenever opportunity offered, in the kirkyard. This was a strange trysting-place, but as Jean was fond of loitering on Sabbath evenings beside the little graves of Ellen and Bertha Spey, Duncan very naturally made his way there, and generally finding her alone, a close friendship gradually sprung up, and, ere long, had so ripened into affection, that one bright evening in May he whispered into her not unwilling ears the story of his love.

Her head reclining on his bosom, his manly arm encircling her waist, and pressing her to his side, Jean received his honest, open-hearted declaration of love, with that pure feeling of unalloyed happiness that can occur but once in a life. Through tears of joy gleams of earnest love shone from her eyes as she turned them towards him, and Duncan, reading there the wished-for answer, kissed her trembling lips, that vainly tried to speak, while the flowers of the hawthorn, the only witnesses of their betrothal, fell over this scene of a new and living affection, as they had often before done over the lonely graves of those whom love had been powerless to protect from death's embraces.

The first marriage ceremony which the minister, David Spey, had performed since the death of his wife, was that of Duncan and Jean, and on that auspicious morning it appeared as though the old man had received a new lease of life. His step was almost as buoyant as in the halcyon days of his own prosperity and happiness, and his face shone with a joyous light whose like had not

been seen there for many a day. As he proceeded, however, the ceremony seemed to recall memories of the past, till his hand trembled, a tear fell amongst the leaves of the Bible, and his voice faltered as he pronounced the nuptial benediction on the now happy pair. For the newlywedded couple a small but well-built and comfortable cottage had been prepared, and everything that loving thought could suggest and limited means procure, the mothers of the bride and bridegroom had supplied, while other things much desired, but which they were unable themselves to afford, were quietly added by the hands of kind Mistress Barbara, who, in reply to the profuse thanks of old Janet Campbell, had said in her homely way, "Hoot, woman, it's naething to make sic a claver about."

An easy chair stood by the fire, a luxury neither Duncan nor Jean would be likely to indulge in for many a long year; but when the old minister was found seated there evening after evening, smoking his pipe, and presenting a picture of real enjoyment, it became evident who had been thought of when it was provided.

Duncan Campbell was a fisherman, and had a share in a boat belonging to the village, which his father had purchased for him. Steenie, his elder brother, assisted his father at the mill, and was intended to succeed him in that business; but some time before Duncan's marriage he had gone to the fair at Inverary, and never returned. There he had fallen in with a recruiting sergeant, who, possibly aided in his design by an extra glass of whisky, succeeded in persuading the young man to enlist, and so Steenie had enrolled himself in the ranks of H.M.'s 42nd Highlanders, or Black Watch, at that time fighting under Wellington in the Peninsula. Steenie Campbell, and other recruits, were then hurriedly sent

off under escort to Edinburgh, without being permitted to visit their friends and bid them farewell, or even to advise them of their destination. From thence drafted with reinforcements to Lisbon, they became actors in the great drama of war then agitating the distracted kingdom of Spain.

Of Steenie nothing further was heard until about eighteen months after his brother Duncan's marriage. To his parents this was a cause of much sorrow, for Steenie was their favourite though "Ne'er do weel" son. Seizing the first opportunity that presented itself of escaping from parental authority, he acted cruelly and heartlessly towards them; but yet, in their love, they accused him only of thoughtlessness, and were oblivious to his many errors. It seems to have been the peculiar privilege of scape-graces, from the remotest period, to enjoy the truest parental love, without either valuing or returning it; and probably long before David mourned over the untimely fate of Absalom, the story of the prodigal son had been a sad and oft-recurring experience. Steenie was no exception to this rule, and the love which his parents lavished upon him was a love that had no bound, and would have called him back from his evil ways even at the cost of their own lives.

### CHAPTER III.

“ But be not long ; for in the tedious minutes—  
Exquisite interval—I'm on the rack ;  
For sure the greatest evil man can know  
Bears no proportion to this dread suspense.”

THE marriage of Duncan and Jean had taken place during the summer months, and in the following May their mutual happiness was materially increased by the birth of a little girl whom they named Jeanie. The child was fortunate in attracting, from the earliest hours of its existence, the warm regard of Minister Davie and his sister ; and Jean was often inclined to manifest impatience while submitting with the best grace to Mistress Barbara's well-meant advice and reiterated instructions ; but she had too much esteem for this good and really kind friend to let her perceive that her counsel was not needed.

The minister, seated in his accustomed chair during the long winter evenings, would take the child upon his knee, to the great danger of the clay pipe ; for the random clutches of the playful little hands at the long white stem were often successful in producing a catastrophe. Old David, who heartily enjoyed its babyish freaks, waited with perfect good humour for the refilling of a fresh pipe by Jean, who declared they would need a “ special carrier to fetch pipes frae Inverary, if the



minister didna tak mair care and keep them oot o' the bairn's way," Duncan the while watching these proceedings with commendable pride and satisfaction.

Often in an evening the old people would meet together at their son's and daughter's cottage; and when, at length, a long looked-for letter from Steenie arrived, they all assembled to hear it read by the pastor, who, in evident enjoyment of the suspense of the family, spent what seemed to them an age of time in turning it over and over, carefully examining its postmarks, comparing their various dates, and, heedless of their undisguised impatience, tantalizing his hearers by studying every line and word of writing. "This letter," said he at last, "will have come in the general's private despatch bag, and, by the date on the cover, must have been kept nearly a fortnight at the War Office, beside the time occupied in the journey to Edinburgh, and thence to Inverary; so you see it must have been written more than two months back."

"A' wonder," said Elspeth, "what for the ill-faur'd loons couldna' hae sent a puir body's letter sooner; but it's aye the way wi' folks in high places. When their ain turns are served, it's little they care for ony beneath them; but gang on, minister, I'm no wishing to interrupt the reading, noo it *has* come."

"Better late than never," replied David, "and firstly I'll premise that none of you know whereabouts Rorica will be, for it is written from the British lines before Rorica, August 14th, 1808."

"Lord's sake!" cried old Janet, "what a heathen-like name the place maun hae! I'm dooting there'll no' be ony kirks there, or ministers, to tell the puir lads aboot salvation and the auld covenant."

"None except the episcopals who accompany the forces," replied David.

"And they little better nor papishers, the Lord have mercy on them," exclaimed Mistress Barbara; "but see what the lad says brother, and no' bother us about places nobody knows of."

"Well!" said David sententiously, not willingly conceding a point to female impatience, "Rorica where the lad writes from, is a very important position, though in itself only a village, occupied by the French under Laborde; and which—ahem—"

"Guid guide us! is the man silly?" interrupted Mistress Barbara; "let us have the letter first, David, man, and then you can tell us about the places afterwards."

"Well," replied Davie, turning the letter over in his hands, and still withholding the information, "a wilful woman must have her way like any man—and I doubt your patience is sorely tried, Barbara—Top!"

This last expression, which may seem rather irrelevant, had direct reference to the wick of the candle,\* which required snuffing, and the duty was performed by Old Elspeth, with the finger and thumb, in a way long since gone out of fashion.

The minister once more settled himself to read; but, after his first glance at the contents, he hastily referred to the signature of the letter, which until that moment he had not read.

"Ahem!" he said, "I would premise more."

\* The word "Top" originated in an old custom followed by tailors when sitting on their board and working by candlelight: when the wick of the candle grew long, and the light dim, the first worker who discovered the fact would cry "Top;" each followed in turn, and the last speaker had to snuff the candle with his finger and thumb.

"More sense and less words," broke in hastily his sister, Mistress Barbara, "I'll go distraught this very night if you don't,"—a severe look from her brother once more silenced her, and he proceeded.

"Premise more from the handwriting nor the signature, which, nevertheless, has led—"

"You may lead a horse to the water, but you'll never make him drink," exclaimed the irrepressible Barbara. "Dear, dear! but the man's enough to make a saint swear!"

"Barbara," said David solemnly, "are you not ashamed of yourself to be giving vent to your impatience in that way—speaking about profane swearing and the like? but at any rate I'll warrant you will sing a different song when you hear what I am going to tell you. This letter is not written by the lad Steenie at all."

"Lord abune look doon an' direct us!" muttered Elspeth.

"Save us, minister, d'ye say sae?" cried Duncan.

David, who was still vexatiously enjoying the perplexity of his audience, turned as he spoke and saw the two old people, Fergus and his wife, bearing an utterly mystified and disappointed expression, as they sat side by side by the ingle; on their furrowed faces rested a plaintive, pitiful, and longing expression, and down the mother's cheek tears of anxiety and anticipation were slowly trickling. Uttering no word, their eyes were searchingly fixed with intense earnestness on the minister's face and the letter which he still held unread in his hand. The glance at the expression of wrought feelings on the faces of this aged pair at once dispelled David's procrastination, and he prepared to make known its contents.

"We're a' fules thegether," cried old Elspeth; "dir ye

no' ken that the lad Steenie canna' write a stroke and 'll hae gotten some ane to write it for him."

"That's just it," said the pastor, "and so you see this letter was written by one subscribing herself Helen Murdochson, 6th company, H.M.'s 42nd regiment, and doubtless she will be the wife of some soldier lad who knows Steenie; but we'll see what she says,—

"To Mr. Fergus and Mistress Janet Campbell, Eldmuir.

"DEAR SIR AND MISSES,—Your son Steenie is quite well, and desires his best love to you, for he is sore at heart because he left you as he did mi husban is sarjent of steenies company and steenie will soon be corporal we call him ay steenie because we have so much respec and luv for him and he has been a deal of cumfort to us since our ain lad was taken for he died of the dissenter on the passage out and had to be burred in the sea poor misfortunate laddee steenie has escaped the French bullets and long may he be spared to win home and be a cumfort to you when this sore war is over.

"We have another bairn a lassie Mary in sarvis at Edinburro steenie is well lookt after and I mend his hosen mysell so dont fear for him he has found many friends and though sore harrassed with forced marches and picket duties he is trying to make out an rite a letter to you hisself so you may expec it soon he desires me to give his best love to you over again and also to his brother Duncan and also to all inquiring friends we are under marching orders the morn so please excuse more at present also the spellin and riting from

yours very respectfully

"Please direct

Helen Murdochson.

Private Stephen Campbell

6th Company H.M. 42 Reg

Head-quarters of British Army in Spain."

“And that’s all,” said the minister, as he refolded the letter, and laid it on the table. Then taking off his spectacles, and “twirling” them between his finger and thumb, he sat pondering while he gazed into the fire, and at length said, “The lad’s not done so badly after all, and who knows but it might have been worse.”

“Hech, sirs !” said old Janet, “but it’s sair thocht till a mither’s heart. The letter ye say, minister, ’ll hae been written abune twa months, and the Lord only knows what’s taen place sin syne. They’re ay fechting yonder, and may be my puir bairn lies deed and cauld on some lone braeside, wi’ none to gie him a Christian burial.”

The minister looked compassionately at the afflicted mother, whose heart was full, and whose spirits were bowed down beneath the sorrowful thoughts and forebodings that came crowding into her mind ; and taking a small Bible from his pocket, opened it at the eighth chapter of Romans, and read with deep feeling the twenty-eighth verse, “And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to His purpose.” “This is a true promise,” said the old man earnestly, “and one that is the more comforting in respect of its not saying that things *shall* work, but work, now, ay even now, the counsels of the Most High are adjusting all things for our welfare. ‘He,’ say the Scriptures, ‘neither slumbers nor sleeps.’ He cares even for the poor birds, remembering them in His mercy, and supplying their wants through the cold bleak seasons and amid the winter snows. His love never changes nor grows cold, and we cannot think He will desert the wanderer so far away from kith and kin, and who once bowed the knee with us in God’s presence on many a Sabbath that’s past and gone.

Hear how sweetly the Psalmist speaks to us in the words—

“ ‘I have been young and now am old :  
Yet have I never seen the righteous forsaken,  
Nor his seed begging bread.’

Then now let us approach humbly to the mercy-seat of our all-compassionate Jesus, and present before Him a petition for the misguided lad in a stranger's land.”

All knelt down, and the old man prayed long and fervently, not only for the absent one they loved, but also for all who shared his perils, and might with him be suffering from the horrors of war.

Rising from their knees, each one of that little gathering felt that sense of relief, that lightness of heart, and that happy feeling of resignation, which such a communion of spirits always induces; for though by many unseen and unrecognized, the Spirit of God moves ever to and fro, breathing peace to the troubled mind, whispering joy to the despairing, and ever verifying His words, who, when He bade His sorrowing disciples farewell on the shores of Galilee, said, “ Lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world.” A short silence ensued, and then Duncan, with a brightening of countenance, said, “ Noo I mind it. It is hirpling Jock's gaun' ower till Invarara the morn after the Laird's new English kine; and if the minister wad write a few lines to Steenie he could just post them, and we wadna' lose ony mair time.”

“ Surely! surely!” answered David; “and if Jean has some paper and ink, I will do it at once; or Barbara can just run up to the manse, and fetch all that's needful.”

Jean soon produced the requisite materials, and Elspeth, having lighted another candle, and placed it conveniently for the minister, he sat down to the table, and prepared to answer the letter, first saying, "Now, Fergus, you must just tell me what you would like said to the lad, and you also, Janet, woman; for there's many a message from home that will bring old times and good thoughts into a body's mind when far away, so you can speak and I'll write."

"Weel, minister," said Fergus, "an' thankin ye kindly for your help; you maun just tell him we're a' weel, and sair langing for a sicht o' him; and tell him that the nether mill-stane is unco wore, and that the bodies are no' sae satisfied wi' the grist as they used ta be, and say that I miss him muckle at hame; and ye can say that the Laird's no' that fou' wi' siller that he can pit a new stane in this summer, an' we'el be sair bothered the whiles."


"And tell him," cried Janet, "ta mind an' read the Bible—though dear knows if the lad hes ane, but mebbie the lass wha' writ the letter wull; and tell him no' to be running intil danger mair nor needfu', but just ta dae his duty, and no disgrace his country."

"And tell him," broke in Fergus, "that the brindled coo deed last yule—it was his ain beestie, ye ken—an' the white one hed a braw calf i' the spring, and the goats are doing weel and the bit sheltie, and—"

"And tell him," exclaimed Janet, "to mind and write oft, an' no' to be drinking ower muckle whisky, for it canna' be gude sae far awa' frae Scotland."

"An' gie him a' the folks remembers," said Fergus, "and our ain love, and—ye ken best hoo ta finish it, minister—an' that's a'—"

"Wait awhile," said David, as he finished the letter;



“you have not said anything about Duncan, or Jean, or the little one yonder.”

“A dinna’ mind,” replied old Fergus resignedly; “but you can put it in the post scriptum, if that’s hoo they call it, an’ tell him that Duncan and Jean are wed, an’ hae a bairn, an’ that’ll dae brawly.”

“A real lassie’s letter,” said the pastor, laughing; “the most important news is in the postscript; but never mind, we’ll take better care next time; so now I’ll direct it, and you can give it to Jock in the morning, Duncan, before he sets off.”

“A wad na’ trust that callant wi’ it, an’ I hed ma way,” said Elspeth; “but maybe, when he kens it’s for Steenie, he’ll tak’ care an’ post it afore he gits ower money stoups o’ yill an’ forgets.”

“’Deed, mither, I dinna think Jock will forget,” said Jean; and so, with more cheerful spirits than they had known for many a day, all departed to their several habitations. Duncan and Jean took a loving look at their sleeping child ere they sought their own heather couch; and by-and-by the full moon, rising over the mountains, looked down as if to bless the quiet village, while it shone brightly on the brown thatched roofs, beneath which many whose hearts had ached at sunrise were now resting in the balmy slumbers induced by peace and hope.



## CHAPTER IV.

“ Unquiet childhood, here by special grace,  
Forgets her nature, opening like a flower,  
That neither feels nor wastes its vital power  
In painful struggles.”


IN a valley so peaceful and retired as that in which Eldmuir was situated, the coming of a letter from foreign parts was an event of deep moment, and was the cause of no little commotion among the inhabitants. Steenie's, or rather Mrs. Murdochson's, epistle was handed about, and duly commented upon in each of the neighbour's cottages ; and old Alister McCrae's temper became sorely tried by the continual demands upon him for the newspaper which he occasionally received, and from which information of the doings of the army was hoped to be gained. It was well for him, the Dominie, that he only received these papers at long intervals, for he had little peace until every item of intelligence they contained had been read, and thoroughly explained to every member of the little community. Thus time passed on, and for twelve months nothing more was heard from or of Steenie, and his parents' hearts grew heavy. Anxiety weighed them down ; premature age made inroads on their lives, and their health rapidly gave way beneath the constant worry of disappointment. The mill-stone remained unrenewed ; and dilapidations of the dwelling,

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caused by wind and weather, which had formerly been attended to with praiseworthy diligence, were suffered to remain unrepaired, and neglect, produced by apathy, began to tell its tale of ruin and desolation. The old man's business declined steadily, and his son found it wiser to continue in his fisher's calling than to sell his share in the boat, and take the place of his absent brother at the mill. Nor was it of importance to his father that he should do so, for Fergus had been provident; and, in addition to the interest accruing from a deposit in the bank, had sufficient means from his small farm to supply the moderate wants of his household. Simple in his habits, kindly in his feelings, and gentle in his ways, the old man found much comfort in his son's dwelling; and when the cold winds blew fiercely over the bleak fellsides, he was often found sitting by Jean's fire, his grandchild on his knee, and his countenance displaying a mixture of satisfaction and anxiety that was at once striking and impressive.

On little Jeanie's first birthday old Fergus arrived, bringing with him a kid, lately presented by the old ewe goat at the mill, and this playful animal was duly made, by deed of gift, the lawful property of the babe. The child's youthful days passed quietly and happily, and being more than usually exempt from the maladies pertaining to childhood, she grew up in happiness and in blissful ignorance of the existence of any but a sunny side to life. Duncan Campbell's occupation as a fisherman naturally necessitated his frequent absence from home, and his voyages were ever regarded by Jean and the old folks with feelings of apprehension, which even the profits accruing from his labours did not assuage. His departures were seasons of forebodings and sorrowful leave-taking, and his returns were ever

marked by unaffected, joyous welcomes, that did not fail to make a deep impression on the child, who shared in the continued kindly interest of David Spey, and his sister, who never allowed a day to pass without either one or other of them visiting the cottage. Rudely thatched with reeds, this humble dwelling consisted only of two rooms, each one lighted by a small window; the larger of the two being used alike for kitchen and keeping-room, was rendered more capacious by the out-shot chimney, built from the end of the cottage, affording room for two cutty-stools on either side of the peat fire. A venerable oaken dresser stood opposite the fire, the lower part being used as a clothes-press and cupboard, in which were stored away many articles which were seldom used except on festive occasions. On shelves above the press was displayed the varied assortment of family crockery which they had got together. In the centre of this homely display stood a japanned tea-caddy, supported on either side by a brass candlestick, used only on Sabbath-days, or when the minister and his sister, with a neighbour or two, dropped in to tea; a few earthenware ornaments on the narrow mantel-shelf, together with the old-fashioned and time-honoured rushlight holders, completed the arrangement. This rushlight holder, now a thing of the past, was roughly constructed of iron and wood; a cleft in the top of the iron supported the tallowed wick, and a hook on one side suspended it to the crane, from whence hung the kailpot, or girdle, over the fire, and which could be drawn forward, when necessary, for the purpose of giving light to the party seated around the hearth. A carefully-polished oak table stood in the middle of the floor, while under the window was another of beech scrubbed to a state of wondrous whiteness; the remainder of the furniture consisting of a spinning-



wheel, an ordinary arm-chair for the use of visitors, a rocking and high-backed chairs, a sunkee or low stool for the milk-pails; and a tall, antiquated clock, whose brass face had looked out from between the carved pillars on generations of Campbells, whose memories had almost died away. The solemn tick of this old clock had been listened to with childish awe by those whose lives had ended long ago, amid scenes and times not so peaceful as those whose moments it now counted; and in the bottom of its wooden case were stored herbs, gathered no one knew when, but still supposed to possess many virtues familiar to old Elspeth and Janet.

A tiny crib, rudely constructed of boards gathered on the sea-beach, formed the sleeping-place of little Jeanie, who, at two years of age, could totter about the floor with uncertain steps, aided occasionally by some article of furniture, till, reaching the door-step, she would be received with animation by her frolicksome playfellow, the little kid, where they would gamble together in the sunshine hour after hour, much to the relief of Jean. When the horns of Billy, as the kid was called, were sprouted, and he had grown tall enough to look down upon, instead of up to, his little mistress, he instinctively constituted himself her guardian and companion, permitting, but not in any way favouring, the attentions of Brock, the sheep-dog, towards the child. The dog could, however, show his teeth when the kid's ill-humour became unbearable; but another pet of Jeanie's was too young and gentle to meet with such respect. This was a lamb, the first of the flock which, being found one morning near the spring, had been carefully carried home in Jean's lap, the old sheep following with a satisfied air to the cottage, where the new-comer was placed in a warm basket close by the ingle neuk, and fed with fresh milk.

Jealousy of this new pet soon took possession of Billy's mind ; he rejected with scorn all Jean's efforts at reconciliation, and ultimately showed so much ill-will towards it, that the lamb one day trotted off altogether.

Mistress Barbara, whose time was much occupied in looking after the village children, and supplying here and there some little comforts needed by the elders generally, found her way in an afternoon into Jean's kitchen, and, much to the child's delight, amused her by showing and explaining the illustrations in the Bible, and pleased her by sweetmeats, and other little presents, which she was allowed to search for in her capacious pocket. These she shared with the goat and the sheep-dog.

As little Jeanie's fourth birthday happened on Sabbath, the occasion was celebrated by taking her to the kirk, and the gift of a new kirtle and a pair of " bonny shoes " from old Elspeth.

It was a beautiful spring morning, one of those joyous days when nature seems to awake from the long sleep of winter. The trees and hedges, which the cold night had encrusted in hoar-frost, were now covered with glittering drops of moisture, and the lambs, full of life, gambolled in the green meadows. The hum of insects was heard around, while, high above, like a spot on the blue sky, soared the tuneful lark, singing praises to Him who fills our hearts with gladness. The soft and fragrant morning breeze just gave indications of its presence by gently swaying the tender branches of the weeping birch, now covered with pale green leaves. Amidst all this beauty and loveliness of nature Jean and her daughter entered the kirkyard where stood the minister beneath the hawthorn tree. He was gazing on the mounds which marked the last resting-place of those he had loved and whose memories were so tenderly cherished. Even the child could



*THE FIRST LAMB.*

JACOB J. MONTGOMERY.



not help noticing that the old man's face wore an expression she had not seen there before, and he was heard gently to murmur, "The Lord gave and the Lord hath taken away, blessed be the name of the Lord." As these words escaped almost unconsciously from the pastor's lips he heard the footsteps of Jean and her child near him, and turned and greeted them with a pleasant welcome; but the child's quick eye in that momentary glance detected traces of tears which had recently stolen down the old man's cheeks. As they passed up the churchyard, the little child asked her mother why the minister had been crying, and Jean turning led her to the spot where they had seen him standing, and, pointing to the graves, told her the sad story of the infants Ellen and Bertha. It was the child's first lesson in death, and broke in upon her mind as a new light, and a new theme for thought. Neither the yawning graves nor the sombre trappings of woe were seen by her; she knew of no loss to herself or to those she loved, and perceived only beauty in the green grass from amid which the violets and daisies looked up fresh and blooming. Death thus to her seemed a thing of pleasantness, not of fear, and when her mother told her that those dear ones slept quietly and lovingly together beneath the flowers, and that their happy spirits were now angels with Jesus in Heaven, little Jeanie conceived an image of the tomb that possessed no terrors, and, in place of suggesting dread and sorrow, awakened in her young mind a hope that if she were good, she also would be an angel like them. Thus early, and before she could fully understand it, the child learned a lesson which gave to her character in after-years a hopefulness it might not otherwise have received. From that day she often found her way into the kirkyard, accompanied by her faithful goat, and the two would ramble



together over the sunlit braes, while Jeanie collected the finest heaths and foxgloves she could find, wherewith to deck the graves of Ellen and Bertha.

Upon one of these occasions the old minister passing that way, found her intent upon her self-imposed task. "Child! child! what are you doing there?" said he, almost choked with emotion. The little one looked up into his face and artlessly replied,—

"They're bonnier when they're fresh, are they no?"

"Poor lassie," said the old man, sitting down on the grass and taking the child to him, "you know whose graves they are, then?"

"Mither says Ellen and Bertha were pit to sleep there," replied the child, with innocent simplicity, "and that you loved them lang syne, for they were your ain, and now they are bonny angels far away, wi Jesus"

"Yes, my dear child, they indeed sleep with Jesus. They are not here now, though truly we laid them there side by side long ago; and then their mother followed them, leaving me sad and lonesome—not so very sorrowful, you know, Jeanie, for we have learned to rest in hope, and surely we shall all meet again. But it's not among the graves you should play, lassie, better out on the heathery fells, among the brackens, or down by the burn side."

"A'm no playing," said the child seriously, "but granny says when folks are gane they're pleased if their graves are weel cared for, and then they ken they're no forgotten."

"Forgotten!" replied the old man, "no they are not forgotten, dear—they cannot be; but even if they knew this, it could make them no happier than they are. But I will tell my little Jeanie all about this some other day; now it is time to go home, but first we'll go up to the

manse, and see if Barbara has got a piece of cake, or something nice,—aye, aye, let the goat come along too,” he added, noticing that the child looked back to her companion, who followed with hesitation, as though fearing that his company might not be altogether welcome. They found Mistress Barbara employed in baking scones, and few would have dared to disturb her when so engaged, but on David’s making a request for something nice for Jeanie, she soon produced a goodly slice of cake, which the child, seated on the door-step, proceeded to divide with Billy, who, like the Lord Mayor’s fool, enjoyed anything good.

“Barbara,” said the minister, when the child was out of hearing, “where do you think I found the lassie awhile ago?”

“Dear knows,” replied Barbara. “I hope it was not in any mischief, for I should be sorry to hear that of such a good child, and one who minds so well what her mother says to her.”

“No, no, she was not in any mischief,” said the minister; “but it cannot be right for a little thing like that to be so much among the graves.”

“Among the graves? Lord save us!” cried Mistress Barbara; “was she in the kirkyard?”

“She was indeed, and decking our own dear ones’ graves with flowers. What do you think of that?”

“Elspeth will have been telling her some of those old-wife stories,” replied the pastor’s sister thoughtfully, “but—”

“No, no,” said David; “Elspeth would be more likely to tell her about fairies, bogles, and such like, than about angels.”

“Angels!” exclaimed Mistress Barbara. “What on earth does the child know about angels? But,” she

added, sobbing—for many thoughts and memories rushed into her mind as the minister spoke, “Jean may have told her about our own lasses,” for Barbara had come to consider all David’s possessions, past and present, to be the property of both. “I must tell her not to be planting the good seed too soon, lest it come to nought, still—I don’t know. Our own experience teaches us that there are none over young to die, so we’ll just let the child alone, brother, and I pray God she may grow up a serious, sober-minded maiden.”

Jeanie scarcely understood why Mistress Barbara came to the door, and, clasping her to her bosom, kissed her so tenderly, nor why the eyes of the pastor’s sister were filled with tears; nor why she turned away, and went in so abruptly after doing so; but her childish mind was filled with many thoughts and dream-like images she could not then fully understand, but which, nevertheless, were leading her gently and almost imperceptibly to the true, and therefore real life of woman.

From her earliest infancy little Jeanie evinced a remarkable reticence of character. She was not in reality shy, but appeared to find within herself springs of enjoyment that others could not understand or participate in. This characteristic she inherited from her mother, who, before she came under Mistress Barbara’s influence, was, as has been shown, a wayward girl, whose solitary life was tinged with the romance derived from Elspeth’s goodly stock of legendary lore, and whose surroundings had been such as to induce in her mind trains of musings beyond her years.

Old Elspeth ever loved to discourse about those troublous times, when the hardy clansmen were ready at a call to gird on the claymore, shoulder the battle-axe, and accompany their hereditary chieftains to the battle-

field or on the midnight foray. Her mind was stored with innumerable ballads and tales of the days of chivalry, and she seldom concluded any of her narrations without the introduction of some ghost story or fairy tale, for whose truthfulness she vouched. These teachings gave reticence of character to the girlish Jean, which she in turn imparted to her own child, in whom it was fostered and rendered more impressively apparent by the simple but earnest religious spirit which Barbara's teaching had planted in her mind, and moulded into something higher and nobler than she herself had ever known.

There was one, however, to whom little Jeanie became warmly attached, and between whom and herself there seemed to be formed a peculiar intimacy often found in children of the same age.

Donald Graham, a boy about a year older than herself, was the son of a skipper in the merchant service, who had married the only daughter of Alister McCrae. Some three years previous to the period about which we are writing he had sailed to the coast of Africa, since which time neither he nor his vessel had been heard of. His poor destitute and distressed wife, whom, with her child, he had left in Glasgow, supported herself as best she might. Possessed of a proud and independent spirit, she would accept no charity, and even her father's repeated offers of a home with him as before were tearfully declined; for in her inmost heart was a presentiment—indeed almost a certain hope—that by living in seaport towns some tidings might yet by chance reach her of the absent one. Often would she linger for hours by the quay side, wistfully gazing upon some homeward-bound vessel “hauling in,” sick at heart with the “hope deferred” which ere this would surely have overcome many perhaps

better born and educated than herself had they been placed in similar circumstances.

The brave heart of this noble Highland woman never failed her. The seasons rolled on, until years marked the duration of her loss; but she waited calmly and patiently, still praying on in the faith which never left her, and expecting the tidings that never, never came. At last, induced by the pressure of poverty to part with her child, he was sent to his lonely grandfather at Eldmuir, where he became a solace and a source of joy to the old man.

As might have been expected, little Jeanie and the boy Donald became great friends, and the girl would listen with childish pleasure to his stories of the big ships and the bearded sailors which he had seen in the seaport city. To her he was a real hero of romance, and when, in his childish way, he talked of his intentions of eventually becoming a sailor, and going round the world in search of his father's vessel, she implicitly believed him and encouraged his plans.

The two children spent much of their time together, preferring as the scene of their sports the pool in front of the minister's dwelling, because there Donald could sail his little toy-ships and talk of exploits to come. Here they would play for hours, the goat browsing on the banks of the stream, while old Brock, stretched out in some sunny spot near at hand, doubtless also considered himself a very important actor in their mimic dramas.

When Jeanie was in her fifth year Barbara had introduced her to the mysteries of the alphabet, in which Donald, partly instructed by his mother, and afterwards by Alistair, was already a proficient, and he, having about this time received from the pastor's sister, on her return

from Inverary, the present of a picture story-book, in which rude wood-cuts represented the animals supposed to be inmates of Noah's Ark, it proved a welcome addition to their amusements. So time passed on, and, while out in the busy world great and stirring events were taking place, only the rumours of what was agitating Europe reached, and but slightly disturbed, the peaceful tranquillity of Eldmuir.

Of Steenie nothing had been heard since the receipt of a letter written by himself, which arrived about a year after that from the sergeant's wife. It stated that he was well, and had received promotion, so that henceforth his address would be "Corporal Campbell." Since that time nothing further was known until, in the early part of 1812, a newspaper reached Alister, which contained a long account of the battle of Ciudad Rodrigo, in which Steenie's regiment had taken part and suffered severely. This intelligence was the source of much distress to his mother, who, in continually fretting over suppositious fears, affected both her health and temper. She became morose, often unjustly upbraiding her husband with being the cause of their son's departure, while he, poor man, could do nothing to disabuse her of this impression, but patiently submitted to all her caprices.

Meanwhile, affairs at the mill grew worse; the business was given up, while the machinery and structure fell rapidly to ruin. Old Janet often grumbled herself into a fit of sickness, and much of Jean's time was occupied in looking after the dairy at the mill-house, for the produce of four cows gave occasion for more labour than the old woman was capable of giving. Jean also at this time expected again to become a mother; that important event being hastened by an accident to be recorded in the next chapter.

## CHAPTER V.

“ ‘ Would’st thou,’ so the helmsman answer’d,  
‘ Learn the secret of the sea ?  
Only those who brave its dangers  
Comprehend its mystery ! ’ ”

LONGFELLOW.

It was a lovely April morning in the year 1813 ; the dawn had been clear and cloudless, and, as it was the last day of the week, the fishing-boats of Eldmuir were expected home.

The weather on the west coast at this season is often so treacherous and changeable, that the earlier promises of a fine day are not always realized. As the forenoon drew on, large masses of cloud appeared in the north-west and light fleecy vapours scudded across the blue sky overhead. There was a hollow murmur in the rising wind, well known to those whose business is on the bosom of the great deep and to dwellers on the coast, whose nearest and dearest are often exposed to the fury of the tempest.

The cattle beginning to descend from the high ground, and the sheep to huddle themselves together behind any wall that their instinct taught them would afford shelter, gave presage of a coming storm, and though the sun still shone out brilliantly at intervals, irradiating the bright mantle of spring verdure and giving greater

brilliance to the entire scene, by noon it was evident to all that the tempest would soon break in its fury over the village. The minister, well defended from the weather by his grey plaid, and with an old Scotch bonnet drawn down almost to his eyebrows, was seen descending the path which led from the manse to the sea-shore. Anxiety was expressed in every feature as he scanned with forebodings the distant horizon, above which not a sail had as yet appeared. As he passed through the hamlet, he was joined by old Fergus and several of the villagers, including the women, whose faces told plainly which among them had friends, husbands, or brothers out in the boats at sea.

"Gude day, minister," said Fergus; "I doot we are gaun to have kittle weather the night. The sea maws are gathering in fast, and it mun be unco wild outside when they seek a shelter on the cliffs."

"Yes, indeed," responded the pastor, "and I would fain catch a sight of the boats, but perhaps they may have run in to the lower loch."

"No fear of them!" cried Alister, who had followed immediately behind; "the lads would not be away over the Sabbath, minister, if the wind will let them carry sail enough to reach home. It's well they know there would be many a sore heart and sleepless eye this night if they stayed away—Though it might be more prudent, that's a fact," he added, as a violent gust, one of the precursors of the storm, nearly took off his bonnet.

There were now a score of persons assembled on a little knoll between the village and the beach which afforded the best look-out they could obtain. The breakers tumbled in upon the shore in huge seething masses of white foam, not roused by the wind per-



ceptible to the villagers, but obedient to the impulse of larger billows behind that rolled before a fierce Atlantic gale.

Jean, with her cloak drawn over her head, was looking eagerly seaward, ever and anon turning towards the surrounding speakers, standing, as if to catch some ray of comfort from what they said, at the same time clasping to her bosom the form of little Jeanie, who neither comprehended the sorrow and anxiety expressed by her mother, nor understood the danger threatening her father and his brave companions at sea.

As the day advanced, the dense storm-clouds which had for some time lingered above the far horizon rose in a body, and spread over the whole arch of heaven. The fitful gusts had increased in strength, following each other more rapidly until the gale, in all its fury, swept down upon the coast. The waves—hollow cavernous waves—rearing their crested heads in quick succession, as they were hurled, in headlong confusion, among the rocks, added the roar of their breaking to the sullen sougling of the wind. Occasionally there swept up the valley a torrent of rain, drenching the anxious watchers, and hiding for a short space their seaward view. This caused them to strain their eyes more and more eagerly, as though the few moments when their outlook was obscured might be just the very time when a sight of the welcome sails would be obtained.

“A’ see them! A’ see them!” at length cried delightedly an old woman on the summit of the hill. “Eh, sirs, but ma auld e’en are no sae bad after a’; there’s just sax o’ them—oor ain boats; the Lord be praised!”

“I see them now myself,” said Alister; “but, dear me, they’re far to leeward; your eyes are well enough, Menie, woman; for did I not know that all the gull’s

and gannets were safe housed on the craigs, I might have taken yonder sails for the glint of a sea-fowl's wing."

"Na, na—they're the boats man, and naething else. The Lord be praised!" responded Menie.

"These words are lightly spoken, Menie," said the pastor, "and I trust they come from the heart; for if these boats and they who man them come safe to haven this night, we shall all have much need to praise the Lord."

"D'ye see Duncan's boat, minister?" said Jean eagerly, seizing on the old man's plaid, which fluttered across her face.

"Don't be afraid for Duncan, Jean," replied David; "there are six of them, so his boat will be among them, though we cannot make it out as yet."

The gale was steadily increasing, and the boats were, as Alister had remarked, a long way to leeward—that is, they were far down the coast; and as the breeze blew directly on shore, it behoved them to sail as near the wind as possible, to allow for their inevitable drift. Moreover a reef of rocks, called Meg's Neb, extended out for some distance beyond the rude stone pier forming their little harbour, and must needs be weathered ere they could obtain a shelter. This reef was sufficiently below the surface to oppose no obstacle to a boat in calm weather, but, now as the sea was breaking violently over, it became dangerous.

The boats were evidently carrying as much sail as the state of the weather allowed, and in less than an hour were near enough to permit of those on shore distinguishing their several craft.

"Yonder's oor Tom's boat," said one buxom wife. "I ken it by the sail that was riven last summer, an' I mended it mysell wi' Robin's auld breeks. The Lord

grant it may haud together the noo when its sair wanted."

"And yon's Broxie, wi' the creels heaped up," said another.

"And Jean, lass, I see Duncan noo," cried a third; "he is the hindmaist one of a'."

"He is indeed," said Alister, whose nautical knowledge was considerable; "and I doubt he will have to make a tack off, or he will not weather the Neb."

"Is he in ony danger, Alister? Tell me, tell me what you see, and let me know the worst," cried Jean.

"Danger!" exclaimed Alister disdainfully; "don't be afraid, woman. Duncan knows what he's about, and the 'Campbell's Lass' will not flinch from twice as much sea and wind as we have yet. Canny with the helm, laddie! canny with the helm!" he cried, as if those on board the little craft could hear him. "That's bravely done—she comes about like a top. Haul in the sheet a bit more! Ay, ay—that's grand. Hoot, she cares no more for the sea that's running than—"

Here Alister was interrupted by the minister's broad bonnet, which blew full in his face.

"I always say," he exclaimed, "there's philosophy in letting a hat run when its blown off; there's always fools enough standing round to pick it up and fetch it to you; so there's your hat, minister; it will be better on your head than voyaging down the beck such weather as this. But, gude guide us, where is yon laddie away to?"

Duncan was evidently determined to gain a good offing, and, with a view probably of fetching well to windward of the other boats which had now anchored, he was standing far out to sea.

When he again tacked, it was seen by all on shore, who

watched every manœuvre of the boat with critical precision, that he would now be able to run in almost with a free wind. The fishing vessel was soon within a cable's length of the breakers on Meg's Neb, and Duncan, standing up in the stern sheets, cheerfully waved his hand to his friends on shore, whom he could now distinguish. At that instant a fiercer blast than usual struck the boat; the wind had also veered a point, which is not unusual in gales amid headlands, and in the vicinity of mountains. This caused her to fall off considerably towards the point, without, however, placing her in any immediate danger. She was brought to again with rapidity, but, as she obeyed her helm and swept suddenly to the wind, a loud crash was heard, even above the roar of the breakers, and the frail mast, upon which all their hopes depended, went by the board.

The boat instantly broached to, and it was seen that her active crew were using their utmost endeavours to clear away the wreck, disentangle themselves from the sail, towing half over the gunwale, and employ their oars, which might enable them to keep out of the breakers until assistance arrived.

"Too late! too late!" cried the minister, as he saw the vigorous efforts for self-preservation almost crowned with success, just as a tremendous billow, taking the little vessel "broadside on," cast her a shattered wreck on the outer rocks of the Neb.

A moment of death-like silence ensued among the terror-stricken assembly on the knoll; then a low, agonized moan was heard, and Jean fell prostrate on the ground.

"Ma bairn! ma bairn! the death thraw is on her," cried Elspeth, throwing herself on the body of her daughter, but the experienced eye of Menie detected

more than the terrors of the moment allowed Elspeth to perceive.

"It's a fainten fit is on her," she said, "but there's mair to come. Stir yoursel, Elspeth, and we'll carry the puir body in by."

Two or three of the women who still remained attracted as much by the distress of the young wife as by the more fearful calamity which had happened on the sea, hastily bore the almost inanimate sufferer into the nearest cottage, where we must now leave her while we describe what was going on upon the beach.

Three stout cobbles were hastily manned, and although it was an almost hopeless task, their crews were endeavouring with all their skill and strength to urge them towards the scene of the accident, shouting lustily as the bent oars quivered under their vigorous grasp. Brave hearts were there engaged in that furious struggle between life and death. The mighty spirit that had animated the fearless Gael through ages of violence and oppression was there; the spirit that had borne up the dauntless Wallace and the princely Bruce was there!

Aye, unquelled and unquenchable, the courage of the Highlander filled the hearts of those noble fishermen, fighting almost against hope and without a thought of turning back, or fear for themselves as they struggled onward through the billows which threatened each moment to engulf them. A cheer, a loud ringing cheer, distinctly audible to those standing on the shore, echoed from the leading boat. It told its own story, and was joyously echoed back again, adding fresh nerve to those who had almost given life for life in the noble endeavours to save their friends and neighbours. Alas! it was but one of the wrecked boat's crew that was rescued. Clinging with almost a death grip to the broken

mast, battered and bruised by dashing among the rocks and the fragments of his vessel, Duncan, insensible and almost lifeless, was dragged into the boat, which speedily pulled to the shore, leaving the others to prosecute further their still more hopeless search. Having landed with their inanimate burthen, the fishermen who had rescued Duncan were bearing him towards the nearest cottage, but were prevented entering by a woman who suddenly appeared at the door, and cried, "No there, no there, lads, there's ower much trouble a'ready in by."

Old Fergus coming up hastily, after assisting his gude wife into the dwelling of her son, and almost overcome with joy and with intense emotion, said, "Fetch him here, gude lads, brave lads. The Lord reward ye for what ye hae dune already, risking your lives for an auld man's only son. God bless ye, lads. Gently there, haud a care, mind the creel man'ny. Diel's in the bairns, pitten things i folks way at sec a time. Noo, the muckle door stane, it's ae step, nae mair, steady, steady," and at last amid manifold directions the unconscious Duncan was laid safely on his bed, when his mother, now equal to the task, took him into her own care.

Meanwhile, the other boats, which had been contending longer with the foaming breakers in their noble and courageous task, pulled sadly back to the shore—unsuccessful. There were three persons standing on the beach awaiting them. An old man, bowed with years and infirmity, and with scanty hair of snowy whiteness, stood there leaning upon his stick, a woman kneeling at his feet, all regardless of the rain which fell in torrents, and gazing with fixed and stony eyes at the remorseless waves. They were the parents of one whom those cruel billows had refused to give up! Their only hope, their

staff and support, as declining years came stealing away their strength and energies, was now cold and lifeless! Another knelt beside them in speechless agony, and she a widow! She, too, had lost her only son—gone in the pride of his manhood, gone in a moment without a farewell or a last embrace. Who can penetrate the sorrow of those bereaved hearts? What words may describe it? Known only to Him “before whom all hearts are open,” and who was Himself “a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief,” it is not for human words to fathom the grief and sorrow of true hearts in a time of trouble like this!

The minister, bareheaded, feeling the presence of woe too sacred for mortal comfort, stood near them, his eyes uplifted towards Heaven, and his soul ascending thither in silent prayer. The third of the “loved and lost” who had been Duncan’s partners, had neither kith nor kin in Eldmuir; he had shared their sad and terrible fate, but there was no one there to mourn for him!

However familiar with the great king of terrors the dwellers on our coasts may be, and however frequently they may be tried by the sight of death which almost every winter repeats, the few who have experienced a great and irreparable loss, and who are left in their loneliness to mourn for those so loved and who can never return—learn truths and solemn lessons which, once graven on the heart, can never be effaced or forgotten.

## CHAPTER VI.

"I like that ancient Saxon phrase which calls  
The burial-ground God's Acre—it is just ;  
It consecrates each grave within its walls,  
And breathes a benison on the sleeping dust."

LONGFELLOW.

The cottage where Jean was now lying, attended by mother and old Menie, a far different scene was presented—"The angel—not of death, but life"—was there, and by the suffering mother's side an infant was lying, its little face redolent of health, notwithstanding that trouble and anxiety had brought it prematurely into the world. Yes! Jean was again a mother! One more immortal spirit had commenced this purged existence, at a moment when that of its mother had been hovering and quivering in the very verge of an almost certain departure. Death and life were thus, as ever, interwoven with each other in a close and intimate union. While some are yielding up their sin-stained souls, others, pure and spotless, are to take their places, and to become blessings, and fountains of eternal affection—for "God is merciful," and His love."

When Jean first recovered from the swoon into which she had fallen on beholding the wreck of her husband's life, she seemed not to remember that terrible event;



but afterwards, when they laid the little babe by her side, a rush of sorrowful recollections crossed her mind, and she became once more unconscious.

"Best tell her," said Menie, endeavouring to restore suspended animation. "Best tell her he's not gane; joy will no kill her, and it would be cruel to keep her in suspense. Tell, Elspeth woman, and the sooner the better."

"Jean, lass," whispered Elspeth softly, "Jean—its your ain mither speaking and bidding you no to greet; the Lord has been vara mercifu', and you have feared mair nor has come to pass."

"What!" cried Jean, starting violently. "Did I not see with my own eyes?"

"You see'd the boat whomled ower," replied Elspeth, "but it has pleased the Lord to spare him you love."

"Duncan?" cried Jean. "Did I hear aright? Is it Duncan?"—but feebleness again overcame her, and it appeared as if Menie's expectations were not to be realized.

"You have done it noo," exclaimed Elspeth, wringing her hands. "O woman, woman, ye made me say it!"

"Nae doot!" answered Menie gruffly, "just blame me if it's pleasing to ye, but I'll warrant the lass is no a bit the waur."

Jean rallied again, and looking earnestly at her mother, said solemnly,—

"Tell me, mother, and the worst can make no difference now. Is my Duncan living?"

"Ay, is he," cried Menie, "and doing brawly, though he did get a clout or twa fra the rocks."

"Then take me to him at once," said Jean. "Why should I be separated from my husband? Take me to him at once."

A vain trial of her strength, however, convinced the young wife that it was impossible for her to be removed that evening, she therefore submitted to her detention in Menie's cottage, and when old Fergus came with a loving message from Duncan, who was weakly as herself, she appeared happy and resigned.

The minister and his sister, looking in as they returned to their home, gazed on a quiet, tranquil scene in that lone cottage. Old Menie, seated by the fire, was looking dreamily into the red glow of the burning peat. Her thoughts might be of the far past, or the sorrowful events of the day, the vicissitudes and uncertainties of life, or of the future—far away beyond the dark river, amidst scenes of glorious brightness and boundless hope. Seated there, cowering over the fire, she spread out her withered hands to gain warmth from the smouldering embers, and crooned away to herself a plaintive melody that might either have been a half-forgotten ballad or psalm, learned in her younger and brighter days. Elspeth, seated near the bed, her strongly marked Scottish features half illumined by the sinking fire-light, and her attitude wearing an earnest never-flagging watchfulness, suggested to the mind the idea of a seeress of old performing some mystic rite, or communing with the spirit world, rather than that of a mother keeping guard over the slumbers of her only child. The pastor and his sister stole quietly away to their own home without disturbing the inmates of the cottage. They, themselves, had been on a mission of mercy and love, speaking comfort to the hearts of those who had been suddenly bereaved, and carrying consolation to spirits broken with grief and suffering. They entered the house of mourning, not as some do, for the purpose of leaving an almost costless tract and looking with idle

curiosity on the troubles of the poor, but in the full and blessed spirit of human sympathy.

Huge fires were kept burning all night long upon the rocks, and many of the inhabitants waited near the beach in hopes that their unfortunate comrades might be discovered, but it was not until the morning tide, after the fierce gale had subsided, that the bodies of those poor drowned fishermen drifted to the shore.

Tenderly they raised their lifeless bodies, and gently bore them to where in life their homes had been. Even the loss of the poor stranger was now mourned, and his praiseworthy actions that had been unnoticed when they occurred, were all recalled, and the people in bated breath spoke of them with a solemn respect that might not have been accorded to the living, but was now demanded by the presence of a mighty power which had stamped the sovereignty of the tomb upon those pallid features. It was indeed a day of gloom and sadness in Eldmuir, for "Man had gone to his long home, and the mourners went about the streets." From house to house the women passed to and fro, the men, gathering in little groups, whispered rather than spoke to each other, and all who could, wended their way to kirk, which was well filled that day. The storm had departed, the sky was clear and cloudless, the cattle sought the sunny uplands, and the sheep scattered themselves like snowflakes along the brown fell sides, as though nothing had happened. Bright flowers of early spring that had been bowed before the storm lifted their little heads, and greeted the sunshine, glancing in myriad rainbow hues from every drop that hung from the leaves and blades of grass ; the voice of nature seemed to say in countless, varied accents, Peace ! Peace ! but in the heart of man there was no peace, for each one realized the

uncertainty of human existence, and the solemn truth that "In the midst of life we are in death."

Sobs, deep and full of anguish, broke in ever and anon, as the good old minister read the words of the Book of life, and his voice seemed, as it were, an echo from the forgotten past, speaking truths that were for "all times and people, kindred and tongues."

"They that go down to the sea in ships, that do business in great waters, these see the works of the Lord and His wonders in the deep. For He commandeth and raiseth the stormy wind which lifteth up the waves thereof. They mount up to the heaven, they go down again to the depths; their soul is melted because of trouble." . . . . .

"Brethren!" said the old man, as he concluded a long and solemn discourse on the words of the Psalmist, "it hath pleased Him who is Lord of all, and who, it seemeth, in a little wrath has hid His face, and yet with everlasting kindness shall gather His people,—it hath pleased Him, I say, to cut down the flowers in their beauty, and the noblest trees of the forest. The dried grasses are left, and the pride of the garden is perished. The blighted and withered trunks are standing almost useless, the young and tender saplings clothed in the verdant promises of summer are gone. But who may impugn the decrees of the Almighty?—'God is love,' 'Like as a father pitieth his children, so the Lord pitieth them that fear Him.' Not in anger, I say, but verily in mercy He may have sent us this sad visitation. Those we loved are truly gone from us; but let us hope they are gone to Him, where they shall neither hunger nor thirst, where the inheritance of toil shall no longer cling to them, where there are neither bondmen nor bond-maidens, where weeping is unknown, and where the

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Lamb shall lead them through the bright gardens of His kingdom—a kingdom, remember, purchased with His blood, who toiled and suffered and endured the manifold ills of this life of probation, as we also must toil, suffer, and endure. Our beloved are, we trust, safe with Him who ‘so loved the world that He died for the world,’ even Jesus Christ our Lord. Let us pray.”

Fervent was the pastor’s supplication to Heaven, and there was not a heart that day in the little kirk but felt hallowed and sanctified by his words and intercession, and realized that thus through the furnace of affliction men come out purified and strengthened for the warfare of life.

Next day the funerals took place. There was not one in the village except Duncan and Jean, who, naturally, were as yet incapable of exertion, who did not follow in the long, silent procession to the kirkyard. Mistress Barbara led the two children, Donald and Jeanie, and stood with them by the open graves. It was a solemn and impressive spectacle, filling every heart with awe, and deep religious impressions. Each one, whose calling led him out upon the sea, felt how soon such a fate might perhaps be his, and each one dear to these by ties of kindred or of love, felt how uncertain it was that ere another Sabbath should dawn they, too, might be mourning an irreparable loss.

In the stillness of that sunny afternoon they laid their dead to rest, and, amid the expressive silence of nature, the mournful stanzas of the 20th Psalm rose heavenward, breathing from the depths of human sorrow a lowly spirit of resignation and hope.





WILLIAM H. HARRIS.

SUNNY HOURS OF CHILDHOOD.

## CHAPTER VII.

“A simple child,  
That lightly draws its breath,  
And feels its life in every limb,  
What should it know of death?”

WORDSWORTH.

ERE the close of another week affairs so sadly and ruthlessly broken into by the wreck and its consequences had settled down again into their old course at Eldmuir. The fishermen sought the fishing-grounds, the farmers their usual avocations, while the minister and his sister busied themselves in procuring the means of support for those who had lost their only helpers, and the children, Donald and Jeanie, without a thought of irreverence, played at shipwreck with their little toy boats on the mill-pond. They lit a fire of dried bracken on a piece of rock beside the pool, and, having found a dead sparrow, threw it in the water, and then rescued and buried it, in imitation of the sad event which had so recently taken place.

Duncan soon recovered from the effects of his accident, but a great change seemed to have come over him. He was one of those sanguine persons whose energies are easily damped by misfortune, and who, setting out hurriedly in the great race of life, find, when too late, they have mistaken their vocation. Such might not have



been said with truth concerning Duncan, but, still the loss of his boat so paralyzed his efforts, that he would often sit day by day in perfect apathy, and without taking any steps towards repairing his ill-fortune.

Jean, when she was again able to go about her household duties, avoided speaking to him on the subject. "He has taken it much to heart, poor man," she used to say, and would frequently endeavour to cheer and bring a smile on his constantly gloomy and sorrowful countenance. Her efforts were generally unsuccessful, though the *crowing* of his little baby (which was named Jessie) when the mother held her up to his face, and her tiny hands got entangled in his long black locks, always brought a pleasant light into the poor man's eyes. Frequently he would go up to the mill in an evening, and, with feelings of deep distress, listen to his mother's lamentings for the absent Steenie, rendered more acute and ill expressed by her increasing bodily ailments. On these occasions Fergus usually got out of the way, leaving his good wife to the care of Mistress Barbara, who always did her best to relieve the suffering and despondent woman. Duncan thus found no peace either at the mill, or in his own home, for, though Jean did not speak unkindly, he imagined there was something in her look which constantly upbraided him for his idleness.

Meanwhile, Alister continued to teach little Donald, and Mistress Barbara gave lessons to Jeanie in working samplers and other pieces of needlework, much to the satisfaction of Jean, who was thankful that the care of her child devolved upon so estimable a person as the minister's sister. Jeanie was naturally of a kind and thoughtful disposition, and possessed of great amiability and sensitiveness. With such qualities, nothing could have been more favourable for the growth

of the child's mind than her intercourse with the highly religious spirit of Mrs. Barbara. A word gently spoken would induce her to abandon the most favourite amusement if it was displeasing to others, and the slightest rebuke would move her to tears. So the spring advanced, and the flowers again bloomed in all their beauty.

First, in retired corners, appeared the snow-drops and crocuses, afterwards came the daisies, primroses, and gowans, and with them came warmer weather, which cured old Janet of her rheumatism, and gave relief to Jean, whose time was fully employed in her many duties.

The minister had more than once spoken seriously to Duncan about doing something for the support of his family; old Fergus also had been rather peremptory in expressing his opinion regarding his son's conduct, but still Duncan failed to rouse himself from his apathy, and, when Jean would allow him, was usually found sitting idly in the kitchen, or playing with little Jessie.

The best of women occasionally, and not without cause, lose their tempers; so one day it was with Jean. The butter will not come, or the bread will not rise, or the peat will not burn; but, under all circumstances, the baby will cry and must be attended to. Perhaps one or more, or even all, of these trials had concurred to upset Jean on this occasion. Going to the press, and taking thence a stocking-foot which served the purpose of a money-bag, she remarked, "There's not much left now."

"Lord keep us from poverty!" replied Duncan, "but indeed I hardly know what to do."

"Poverty!" she cried, "and why not poverty, or worse, if things are to go on in this way? What can we look for but poverty, when folks that might work are

sitting all day long in the chimney-corner doing nothing, and so many mouths to fill?" "Well," she continued, "I know one thing, and that is that every penny I had put by for Easter-time is in this old stocking, and you can see how much is in it now. Dear, dear, and ourselves wanting new clothes, and the bairns will be growing out of theirs as fast as they get them. Ay, ay, you may well say 'poverty,' and pray the Lord to keep you from it; but do you no mind what the minister said last Sabbath was a week, that the Lord aye helps them that help themselves, and that's not what you are doing; and though I say it that should not, it is not every wife would keep things so careful for you—but one might as well speak to the door-post. Poverty," she kept muttering to herself as she bustled about the house, giving vent to her excited feelings in this way, till she again stopped before Duncan and inquired, "What stops you going up to the tower, and asking the Laird if you might take the bit farm that was Sanders's before he died? I doubt not but we could fit up the place and by-and-by get stock and gear enough together. You wrought on your father's farm before you went to the fishing business, and a bonny spec' that was—but when folks will try nothing, of course they'll do nothing."

"They wouldn't give me the Hill farm," said Duncan. "I was speaking to Dugald McAlpine yesterday, and he said (though he could not tell me why) that the Hill farm leases were not to be renewed when they fell in, and Sanders's place is going to be pulled down this summer."

Jean was silenced for the time, but felt it incumbent upon her for the children's sake to lose no opportunity of urging upon Duncan the necessity of action. In this she was ably seconded by her mother, who viewed her son-in-law's behaviour with feelings of anger and con-

tempt, saying, "Had she kenned what a feckless loon he would have turned oot, he should'na hae wed her dochter," and it was not long ere her expressions reached the ears of the "feckless loon" in question, who was, however, too conscious of their justice to resent them. These petty annoyances seemed rather to increase than allay the unsettled and apathetic mood of Duncan. He used to take long solitary rambles, no one inquiring whither he went, or on what business; but there was one thing which many acting as he did would not have enjoyed, and that was he always returned to a clean and comfortable fireside. Jean's bursts of impatience were soon over, and amid all her troubles she could often speak a kindly word for him who might be considered in some measure the cause of them. One evening Duncan went up to the mill and found his mother alone, sitting by the fireside.

The old woman placed a stool for him, but did not speak. There was evidently something on her mind she longed to let out, and only waited an opportunity.

"Is father not in?" said Duncan quietly.

"Your feyther *is* in!" exclaimed Janet with emphasis, "and just where he ought not to be if them he has wrought sae hard for lang syne had na ower much thout for themselves and none for ither folk. Your feyther, lad, is just gone to bed wi' the rheumatiz in his shoulder, a thing that needna have happened if you, like a dutifu' son, had helpit the auld man to fauld the sheep afore the rain cam down. I'm sure I dinna ken what's come ower you, Duncan. Sec a helpless spirit was never in ony o' your forbears that I ken o'. It's no abune saxty years syne that the caterans cam doon and liftit a' that your puir grandfeyther had to call his ain. Kine, sheep, goats, pownies, a' went together. Ay, laddie,

the thieves wadna hae left the puir cat if they could hae catched it, forby flinging burning strae on the thatch, and it was na their fauts that it didna burn and leave us all houseless. But then they did not sit down lamenting as you hae done. They shouldered a pike or twa and their Lochaber axes, and gaid awa ower the hills till they came up wi' the loons, and then just gied them dunt for dunt till the thieves had to flee for it, and sae they got a' back again exceptit ane or twa beasties that the Highland lads had killed and eaten; so I tell ye, Duncan, you're the first o' your family that ever sat down greeting ower misfortune, and I hope you'll be the last. Atweel, if Steenie was here, I ken he wadna be sae misset frae earning an honest penny some gate or other."

"There's a deal to be said for Steenie now," replied Duncan, "when he's not here—and, indeed, I don't know what he did before he went to be so much thought on now."

"Dinna speak ill o' your brither, Duncan," said the old woman, "and he mebbie in his cauld grave. Wha kens but he may have fa'en like a true Highlandman fighting again his country's foes, as many of his grand-sires did afore him. There was many a brave Campbell went oot in the 45' that niver come hame again. Sair times them were when husbands, feythers, brothers, and friends, set oot claymore in hand, wi' pipes playing the slogan, their hearts as stanch and true, their courage as firm as the mountains abune them, and a' for what? because they wadna bide oppression and gie the lands o' their ancestors to strangers. Those were times, my son, when many a good man's plaid was his winding-sheet, and he looked for no other burial than to lie hidden away among the waving heather. Waes me, but I often think

the same things are taking place in yon far away land that Alister reads of, and, may be, Steenie has been long numbered wi' the slain."

"Mother," said Duncan softly, "I have often thought lately that I might as well go to the wars myself, perhaps some tidings of Steenie might be found among his comrades, and at least we would know what has become of him."

"Dinna ye do it! Dinna ye think o't," cried the old woman excitedly. "What? you gang to the wars and leave your feyther and mither, and Jean and your ain bairns. O lad—lad, what are ye thinking o'. Do you imagine that the Frenchers' bullets would no find your ain breast as well as Steenie's, and then I would be childless indeed. Na! na! they have ta'en my first born, and that's enough for ae mither to gie. But noo, Duncan, just hear a word o' advice, and dinna be angry. Your feyther's getting auld you ken, and he's far frae strang; could you no lighten his burden a bit, just take ower the management o' things? there's land enough and stock enough, to keep us a' brawly, if you wad but gi'e yoursel to the wark. Think on it, Duncan, lad, and your mither will bless you for't."

"I will think of it," said Duncan, who had a nervous dread of his mother's attacks on this point; so bidding her good night, he hastened to make his escape, for fear she might exact a promise from him which he would afterwards regret. Duncan sauntered down the village till observing Alister, seated at his cottage door, poring over a newspaper by the light of the setting sun, he paused to speak to him.

"Any news of the war, Alister?" he said, seating himself on a large stone by the side of the Dominie.

"Brave news, lad," replied Alister, "that divil Bony-

parte, has caught it at last—everywhere defeated; and if he isn't clean out of Spain by this time next year, why Wellington's not the man I take him to be. There's been lots of fighting, and the lads will be coming back as rich as gentlefolks with their plunder."

"Plunder?" inquired Duncan meditatively.

"To be sure," answered Alister; "do you think them Presbyterian lads would leave the golden candlesticks and images, the jewelled shrines and such like, when they got a chance of lifting them. No fear of it, they would just consider this a practical way of showing their detestation of Romish idolatory, and, doubtless, ther'll be many a spleuchan filled with golden gew-gaws, that never before held anything more valuable than a tobacco-pipe or a paper of snuff."

"Let's look at the paper, awhile," said Duncan. Alister handed it to him, and went to fill a can with water from the brook below.

When the Dominie returned, Duncan had departed, but had left the paper behind him, and the first paragraph that caught the old man's attention, when he took it up, was a notice, offering large bounties for young men fitted to serve in his Majesty's army.

"The Lord grant the silly fool may not go off and list, in his distemper," muttered Alister, as he retreated to his smoke-blackened cottage. Duncan proceeded to his own home with a lighter step than had been his wont for many a day, and there was that about him which betokened a resolution of the doubts over which he had been long brooding. Jean received him with a winning smile, enhanced still more by the tender manner in which he took her to his bosom and kissed her cheek. Little Jeanie, who had been diligently employed upon her sampler, and occasionally attending to Donald's sage

remarks on the pictures in his book, of which they never seemed to grow weary, sprang into her father's arms, as he drew a stool to the hearth, and sat down. The boy looked up surprised at the great change—apparent even to him, in Duncan's manner, and the baby with infantine delight crowed one of those indescribable greetings which fond and loving parents alone can appreciate. It was just such a happy fireside scene as would touch the most callous heart, and though there was an outward semblance of content and approval in Duncan's behaviour, his heart was torn with bitter sorrow, the foreboding of a remorse that would be felt too late.

"Jean!" he said cautiously, as if feeling his way, "I have thought of a way to fill the old stocking at last, but I want you to promise that whatever happens, you'll just believe it is all for the best, and the Lord's will."

"Wherever are you going to, Duncan," exclaimed his wife, the tears involuntarily starting to her eyes.

"Don't ask me, lassie," replied Duncan, "for indeed I cannot tell you, only trust your own husband, and don't think I would do anything wrong."

"I would not believe it of you, indeed I wouldn't," said Jean, "but surely if it is honest and needful, you might trust me with knowing it. Will you be long away, Duncan?"

"The Lord only knows," replied the husband sadly; "but farther or nearer it's all the same; please Him, I'll come back with what will put us all beyond the fear of poverty, and leave the bairns a bonny portion when we are dead and gone."

"Don't speak so gloomy, Duncan, dear," said Jean, "but surely you will not go away directly; you'll see the minister in the morning, won't you? and take his advice, for who else is so fit to give it?"



"I am not sure," replied Duncan, "that the minister and me would exactly agree about it, but we will see in the morning; so just dry your eyes, lassie, and don't look so frightened. What! a Hielandman's wife crying for nothing at all; whoever saw such a thing?"

Jean called up a smile, and appeared satisfied, while she busied herself in preparing their evening meal, which proved one of hopeful festivity.

Afterwards Duncan took down the big Bible from the shelf, and having gathered his little family around him, he conducted their simple worship in a heartfelt, reverent manner, which they never forgot. Alas! how perverse are the minds and hearts of men! It was the last time for many a day that the father's voice was heard within those humble walls. Many a weary month passed by; many a bitter tear bedewed the lonely mother's pillow; many an earnest prayer was sobbed, rather than spoken, to the Father of the fatherless, ere the form of Duncan was again seen amid the little group that gathered round his hearth. Gently, and without disturbing any one, long before sunrise or any of the villagers were astir, he had stolen from his home, and when Jean awakened Duncan was gone!

## CHAPTER VIII.

“ Bear thee up bravely,  
Strong heart and true,  
Meet thy woes gravely,  
Strive with them too.  
Let them not win from thee  
Tear of regret,  
Such were a sin from thee,  
Hope for good yet.”

JEAN was utterly dismayed when she noticed evidences of Duncan's intention to prolong his absence. She rose, however, as if nothing unusual had happened, and prepared the breakfast for her mother and Jeanie. Elspeth, accustomed to his early rambles, did not inquire after Duncan, so the meal passed in silence, and little Jeanie was sent to play ere she went up to the manse for her lessons. When all had been made tidy about the cottage as usual, Jean went anxiously from door to door, inquiring if any one had seen Duncan, and noticed the direction he had taken, but no one could give her any information.

Her heart filled with gloomy fears, her spirit oppressed with bitter feelings, she at length stood, almost incapable of further exertion, at the door of the manse. Her gentle knock was at once answered by Barbara, who stood for a moment in the utmost surprise at the evident

trouble and agitation expressed on the countenance of her visitor.

"Why! whatever ails you, Jean?" she inquired, at the same time drawing the unresisting woman into the kitchen, and placing her on a chair near the fire. Jean submitted to this gentle restraint and burst into tears.

"What ails the lass?" again said Mistress Barbara. "Tell me, Jean, what trouble are you in now, that makes you cry so bitterly?"

Jean told her all; both her husband's mysterious disclosures, and her own instinctive apprehension that he had gone far away—perhaps to the wars. The good woman, stooping down and kissing her tenderly, spoke words of comfort, such as only the good and true-hearted—who make the God of Jacob their refuge and strength—are able to speak.

"He will never come back, Mistress Barbara! never, never more!" sobbed Jean.

It was her first real sorrow. A cloud had swept suddenly and ruthlessly over the sunshine of her life, and darkened all things around her. Recalling with intensified vividness, every trivial incident in their lives during the past month, she became possessed with the idea that she had been unjustifiably harsh in manner towards her husband, and almost meaningless words that she had hastily uttered now acquired a bitter import. Remorse, regret, sorrow, all seemed unable to atone for a simple, hasty expression, that could never more be unspoken. Each unkind look was remembered, and all her fancied shortcomings came back to her with terrible distinctness and painful reality.

Thus it is that hearts are often broken. It is not the work of a moment; not a sudden accident, that physical science may explain, but the gradual snapping asunder

of every joyous chord; the dread realization of a misery self-produced it may be, nevertheless existing, and almost unbearable. Yes, hearts break—

“Like harp-strings are broken asunder,  
By the music they throb to express.”

But the heart of this brave Highland woman was not one that would break in this way. Terrible was the consciousness of her bereavement; sad, almost too sad to dwell on, were the thoughts of those dangers to which her husband would be exposed, but bravely and nobly she bore it all, as those of her race and country so well know how to bear their trials and sorrows. Courage, devotion, nobility of soul—traditionary in the bygone history of Scottish women—remain to this day the proud inheritance of their descendants, and are among their highest characteristics.

“Oh, Mistress Barbara, will he never, never come back?”

And she, thus addressed, looking down into those upraised eyes, so unnaturally bright, whispered, hopefully, words of consolation; and when she said, “Yes, Duncan will surely come back,” it seemed to Jean as if the words were uttered with authority, and filled her bosom with the consciousness of an earnest and almost confident hope.

Why should such things be? Why do men thus throw happiness so recklessly away?

As well ask why are events so strangely woven together in the good providence of God. The answer is ever the same—“Wait!” Not now, when we see through a glass darkly; not now, when the tumult of earthly passions is never still, while the way is to be sought for, and the end of the journey is hidden. Wait! Wait on! And if the answer comes not, still Wait! Submission,

resignation, trust, fighting even against hope, these are the watchwords of heroes; this is the spirit that endures; this is the spirit that conquers.

"Jean," again whispered the minister's sister, "wait on the Lord; be of good courage, and He shall strengthen thy heart."

The suffering woman looked up, and smiled on her kind benefactress and comforter, who proceeded in a low, soft voice,—“They that trust in the Lord shall be even as Mount Zion, which cannot be removed, but abideth for ever.”

At last Jean roused herself and spoke with some composure—she was but a child in the experiences of sorrow. When the minister came down and was told what had taken place, he was much distressed, but could not believe that Duncan had really gone to the wars. He could see nothing in his mysterious manner the previous evening which would lead to the supposition of the unhappy man's having so ruthlessly severed every tie, and gone off to such a precarious and uncertain calling. As he thought more of it, and took a common sense view of the matter, he concluded that the woman's fears had greatly exaggerated a trifling incident, and thus expressed himself to her.

“I cannot but think that Duncan has just gone to Inverary seeking work among the fishing craft there. You know he would not care to serve as a hand where they have always known him as master, so he has probably gone off among strangers to get employment, and we shall see him some Saturday night coming home with a pleasant smile on his face and his pockets full of money.”

This view of the subject was balm to the sorrowful heart of Jean, who waited on with some appearance of

content, and even happiness in the thought of the joyous welcome with which Duncan should be received.

When the Sabbath came the pastor preached from the words, "They that sow in tears shall reap in joy," which was indeed balm to Jean, and sent her to her lonely fireside with a deep consciousness of peace. The neighbours said very little respecting Duncan's disappearance, wondering probably what would come of it. Alister had his apprehensions, so also had old Janet, who became very thoughtful and silent, but both of them kept their suspicions within their own breasts until, at the close of a fortnight, there came a letter from Duncan. He had indeed enlisted in the 92nd Highlanders, and his detachment was under orders to join the army of Wellington, at that time on the frontiers between France and Spain.

Thus their worst fears were confirmed. The letter stated further that the bounty had been sent to the minister of the kirk at Inverary, and would be paid by him to any one from Eldmuir authorized to receive it. Jean, however, stoutly refused this bequest. "It's the price of his very life," she would say in an agony of soul, "and I'll not touch it, no, no, don't ask me." The minister, however, sent over, and receiving the money, gave it to his sister, who laid it by, trusting that opportunities would offer for using it towards the assistance of the bereaved family, without shocking the feelings of the young wife and mother.

## CHAPTER IX.

"Sweet are the uses of adversity ;  
Which, like the toad, ugly and venomous,  
Wears yet a precious jewel in his head :  
And this our life, exempt from public haunts,  
Finds tongues in trees, books in the running brooks,  
Sermons in stones, and good in everything."—SHAKESPEARE.

A BEAUTIFUL summer morning was just breaking when Duncan left his home. Hardly a breath of air was stirring, not a leaf rustled, and only the sound of his own footsteps disturbed the silence. The sun rose, lighting up the shadowy dells, and causing the heath and bracken to sparkle in the dewy freshness which they had gathered during the still hours of night, when Duncan gained the heights overlooking his native village. There lay the old familiar scenes, never before presenting such an aspect of moving loveliness, and the tears came into his eyes as he surveyed, with an almost breaking heart, the homes of those he loved, and who would shortly miss his presence. It seemed sacrilege to intrude sorrow and suffering where so much of human happiness dwelt. He was half inclined to return, but while the thought presented itself to him with inexpressible sweetness his perturbed and restless spirit urged him onward—onward into the dim uncertainty of the future—far from country and kindred—far away from love—that love which seemed now to be a part of his nature, to have grown with his

growth, and strengthened with his fond experience, and that now was stronger than ever, as he and Jean were linked together by ties at once so holy and tender. The old mill, its decayed roof covered with ferns and mosses, and above which drooped the bright green branches of the mountain ash, and the heavy shady foliage of the sycamore, seemed stretching out imaginary arms towards him. The song of the brook, that now fell uselessly over the broken wheel, seemed to warble in well-remembered tones, "Come back, come back." On went the murmuring water, winding among the grey rocks that stood in its course, like tombstones bearing moss-written inscriptions, loitering quietly for a moment under the overhanging banks, till they flashed out into the sunshine before the door of that cottage where his faithful wife and unconscious children were still sleeping. Smoke rising from the chimney of the manse warned him that some one was astir, and that he had no time to linger, if he wished to steal away unperceived. A tear fell on his plaid where it crossed his breast, and remained there long after he had turned his steps away from all that had hitherto made his life worth living for.

He had not taken a penny from Jean's little store, so now he was obliged to beg. This was an act his nature scorned, but the simple, hospitable people of that region cheerfully supplied his necessities. He avoided the Laird's tower and the village which had risen around it where he was well known, travelling by unfrequented mountain paths to the shores of Loch Awe. Passing Kilchrennan, he got a passage over the Loch in the huge, unwieldy ferry boat laden with sheep, for the assistance which he was glad to render in working the vessel. From Port Sonachan he followed the high road to Inverary; but not wishing to visit this place, where many might recog-



nize him, he, with an almost childish shyness, turned aside some miles short of the town, and, crossing Glen Ary, took the road which rounded the head of Loch Fine. From this point he proceeded to Loch Long, and then down the banks of Loch Lomond. Sleeping wherever he could find shelter, Duncan in three days reached Glasgow, where he spent many hours without food, not finding the *canny* citizens so ready to relieve the wants of a sturdy Highlander as were the farmers and country people whom he had met on his journey. He had no difficulty, however, in falling in with one of his Majesty's recruiting agents, who speedily discovered both Duncan's fitness, and, what was of more moment, his willingness, to join the service. When once he had accepted the well-known shilling, Duncan discovered he had not much time for private arrangements; and as the bounty money of £4 was to be paid in Edinburgh, he concluded to wait until, settled in garrison, he could with more certainty send a letter and the money to Jean. Within a week he was in Edinburgh Castle, busy from morning till night with his drill; for a considerable body of men were shortly to be despatched by sea to Chatham *en route* for the Peninsula.

Duncan luckily found a friend amongst those who had been somewhat longer in the service than himself. James Stevenson was a young man with whom he had become acquainted on the fishing-ground. He had no near relations, and had, some years before, run away from a man professing to be his uncle, by whom he had been brought up from his earliest years. This person had treated Jamie so unkindly that, when he was strong enough to shift for himself, he had made his way to the coast, and apprenticed himself to a fisherman. Subsequently his uncle had died, leaving him his property,

which however, only consisted of a few old articles of furniture, and these he at once disposed of, and dissipated the proceeds by feasting himself and friends. Eventually he found himself possessed of a shilling, which a recruiting sergeant, after partaking of his hospitality, slipped into his hand, assuring him he had accepted it from "His Gracious Majesty George III." Under these circumstances, Jamie had submitted with a good grace to his fate, and was destined to prove a constant and valuable friend to Duncan in his vain and perilous search after the lost Steenie.

Having found means, through a good minister in Edinburgh, of transmitting his bounty money to Jean, Duncan wrote the letter which, as we have named, reached Eldmuir a fortnight after he had left. A vessel of war lay in Leith Roads to convey the recruits to their destination in the south, and Duncan was at once taken on board, and the ship put to sea. Heavy hearts were there, and tear-dimmed eyes gazed long and wistfully over the bulwarks at the fast receding shores of their own loved land, as the transport moved slowly and majestically from the offing. Many there, among those on board, now took their last fond look at the purple hills of Scotland, and all felt, in their inmost hearts, they were going forth to endure hardship, suffering, and privation ere their feet could again tread the sunny braes, where childhood's hours had been so happily spent. It was near the close of July, and the two following months were passed by Duncan in barracks, whence he had opportunities of writing to Jean and receiving letters from Eldmuir. Jean's epistles were full of good advice; there was no upbraiding, though both old Janet and Elspeth urged her to do so. She just listened to all they had to say, and then went away by herself, writing loving

words to Duncan, which cheered and comforted him, perhaps more than he deserved, when lying on his hard "service pallet," or mounting guard through the cold, wet watches of the night.


At last came the route, and Duncan, with his comrades—in all about twelve hundred men—embarked for Spain. He had enrolled himself in the 92nd instead of in his brother's regiment, but there was no help for it; so, trusting that as the two corps were included in one division there would be many opportunities of meeting, he watched, without regret, the shores of England sink beneath the horizon, and began to look forward to the union with Steenie, upon which his mind had so long dwelt.

## CHAPTER X.

“Strike the sweet strings, thou gentle girl!  
Pour high the thrilling notes along!  
And sing, while the last ray departs,  
The last great evening song!”

MARY POWLEY.

THERE are some people in the humbler ranks of life of whom it may truly be said that, notwithstanding a few imperfections and faults to which the best are liable, their lives are beautiful; and Jean's life was, indeed, one of these: beautiful in its calm trustfulness and resignation; beautiful in its strength, which rose up, aided by the power of pure religion, superior even to the deepest sorrow; beautiful in its devotion, its truth, its love; and beautiful beyond measure in its own innate purity and goodness. Hers was a heart and character that nobly bore its trials, and wavered not beneath the troubles now crowding around her, and disturbing the hitherto even tenor of her existence. Her life was a life of goodness and of faultless purity, and the example she set was one of Christian faithfulness, resignation and hope. She mourned, as the true wife and mother only *can* mourn, the loss of what to her was dearest on earth, but she mourned in silence. The tears she shed fell on her pillow through many a long, sleepless night, but their presence was never apparent to those her arms lovingly encircled in the morning; her grief was her own,



and her love went out from her heart and included, not only him who was so far away, but his children and all who were dear to him at home.

She had much to do now; and constant occupation, even if she had the inclination, prevented her from brooding over her sorrows. When her daily work was done, she would repair to the manse and pour out her soul's anguish into the ever-attentive ear of Mistress Barbara, who willingly shared her burden, sympathized with her in her trials, and lovingly directed her thoughts upwards to Him upon whom our sorrows and sins were laid.

Fergus, recovered from his indisposition, was soon up and about again; the necessity for activity which past events had imposed upon him was borne without a murmur; though at times the sight of some familiar object associated with those he had lost, almost overcame his serenity. Oft-times seated disconsolately upon some mossy bank, with bonnet in hand and his white locks tossed by the breeze, the tears would flow, and it seemed to him that a fresh life of trouble was to be encountered. The future looked dark, his earthly prospects uncertain, and his failing strength, combined with other troubles, reminded him that his days of labour were drawing to a close.

Little Jeanie had also thus early to learn what trouble and sorrow were; but she took kindly to housework, and thus her childish mind was kept at rest. There was much in which she could assist her mother, besides nursing her baby sister, which was a task she dearly loved. Her influence over Donald was remarkable, and she often lured him from his play to assist their grandfather in his out-door work, and this the boy was ever ready to do.

Old Elspeth was not sparing of indignant remarks concerning her son-in-law's conduct, but she never allowed

Jean to hear them, as on one occasion she had been unexpectedly silenced by her daughter when saying something ill-natured of Duncan.

The health of old Janet was evidently failing. She seldom went out of doors, and within the house her constant grumblings proved a severe trial to Jean, who anxiously strove to spare trouble to the feeble woman, and to make her life as cheerful and easy as she could. Jean, knowing how true it is that people who have led active and bustling lives often become querulous and impatient when, by age or sickness, they are incapacitated from following their usual employment, bore her murmurings and repinings with meekness, and, whenever practicable, deferred to her wishes and judgment. Mistress Barbara still instructed little Jeanie, who daily spent an hour at the manse in reading and in listening to those old familiar Bible stories which ever have had a charm for, and ever will continue to excite an interest in, the mind of childhood.

Jean, who still unjustly blamed herself for being the innocent cause of her husband's going away, felt much anxiety of mind, which was indirectly productive of good. It taught her to bear the separation as a trial she had merited; it sent her in deep humility to the feet of Him "before whom all hearts are open," and it induced the writing of many a loving letter to Duncan, which in their influence over the mistaken and now remorseful man, were the means of restraining him from further imprudence.

Time thus passed quietly on, each month bringing a letter from Duncan, who was away in the South of France. He had seen much fighting; but after each engagement Jean received a letter, often before the intelligence could reach Eldmuir through the newspapers. By these her mind was set at rest concerning him ere the account of

some fearful slaughter came to alarm her. The autumn passed, quickly giving place to an early winter ; and when the cold north winds swept down the coast in fitful gusts, whirling about the heaps of dead leaves, finding their way into every crevice and corner, and bringing clouds of snow-flakes that made winter, if possible, more wintry still, little Jeanie was provided with a warm cloak, Jessie with a hood and stockings, Jean a plaid, and old Elspeth something that we may be sure did not come amiss in that bleak and chilly season.

Poor folks ! how grateful they were to Mistress Barbara for her kind presents ! and she reluctantly submitted to be thanked for what was bought, unknowingly to them, with Duncan's " bounty-money."

Ere the year ended Duncan's conduct came to be regarded more charitably, and at last every one who had upbraided him for leaving so clandestinely was brought to confess that things might have been worse. Jean did not cease to thank God that she had still a husband to think of, even though he was so far away—for might she not have been a lonely widow, and he lying beside the poor drowned fishermen in the kirkyard ? She looked forward hopefully and prayerfully for a reunion, and felt a longing for that blessed period to arrive ; passing much of her time in so preparing herself and her household that a bright and happy home might be ready to receive the wanderer when it should please God to restore him to her.

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## CHAPTER XI.

“Three hosts combine to offer sacrifice,  
Three tongues prefer strange orisons on high,  
Three gaudy standards flout the pale blue skies,  
The shouts are France, Spain, Albion, Victory.”

BYRON.

IN the early part of October, 1813, Duncan found himself in a new country, amid strange scenes and people, and was suddenly plunged into the horrors and uncertainties of war. His regiment, the 92nd Gordon Highlanders, had borne so prominent a part in most of the great battles of the Peninsula, that its veterans could speak familiarly of many incidents only known to those who had been in the midst of action; but its losses had been so great that more than half the regiment was composed of new men, a considerable portion of whom had first been under fire at the passage of the Bidassoa, and the fiercely contested combats of Vera. Now largely reinforced from the mother country by the detachment in which Duncan had arrived, the brave 92nd might have been described at the time as an untried regiment. The *esprit de corps*, however, which it possessed, and the celebrity it had gained in the eventful past, infused the same dauntless courage, as in life had been shown by them, into the hearts of those who now took the places of the fallen.



The head-quarters of Wellington were at Vera, and Duncan longed for opportunity of seeking his brother; but the 42nd lay at so considerable a distance from his own lines, that he could not do so. The 42nd had also been reinforced with new men, and none of those whom Duncan met, knew anything of the veritable Stephen Campbell of whom he was in search.

Being of a serious and reserved temperament, Duncan formed no intimate friendships except with Jamie, and the two friends spent much of their leisure in wandering, as far as the regulation of the service permitted, among the surrounding hills. Often at eventide, when the last few rays of the sun gilded the summits of the Bayonette mountains and the crags of Pena de Haya, Duncan would imagine himself transported back to Eldmuir, fancying the rugged heights before him were the familiar slopes of Ben Cruachan, and the sullen roar of the Bidassoa, softened by distance, the well-remembered murmur of the burn falling over his father's mill-dam. His preconceived notions of war were soon dissipated. He had pictured to himself the possibility of acquiring a fortune by spoils of war, but these dreams were soon dispelled when the stringent orders against plunder issued by their great commander were made known. The natives of the captured provinces occupied by the allied forces received payment for whatever was supplied to the troops, and exemplary executions of maurauders had taken place, for the purpose of showing the determination of Wellington to prevent those excesses that are so frequently and so disgracefully practised by a victorious army. Duncan's florid dreams of the romance of war soon gave way before the stern and naked reality of the life he had hastily chosen. Living on half rations, and experiencing a cold even greater than he

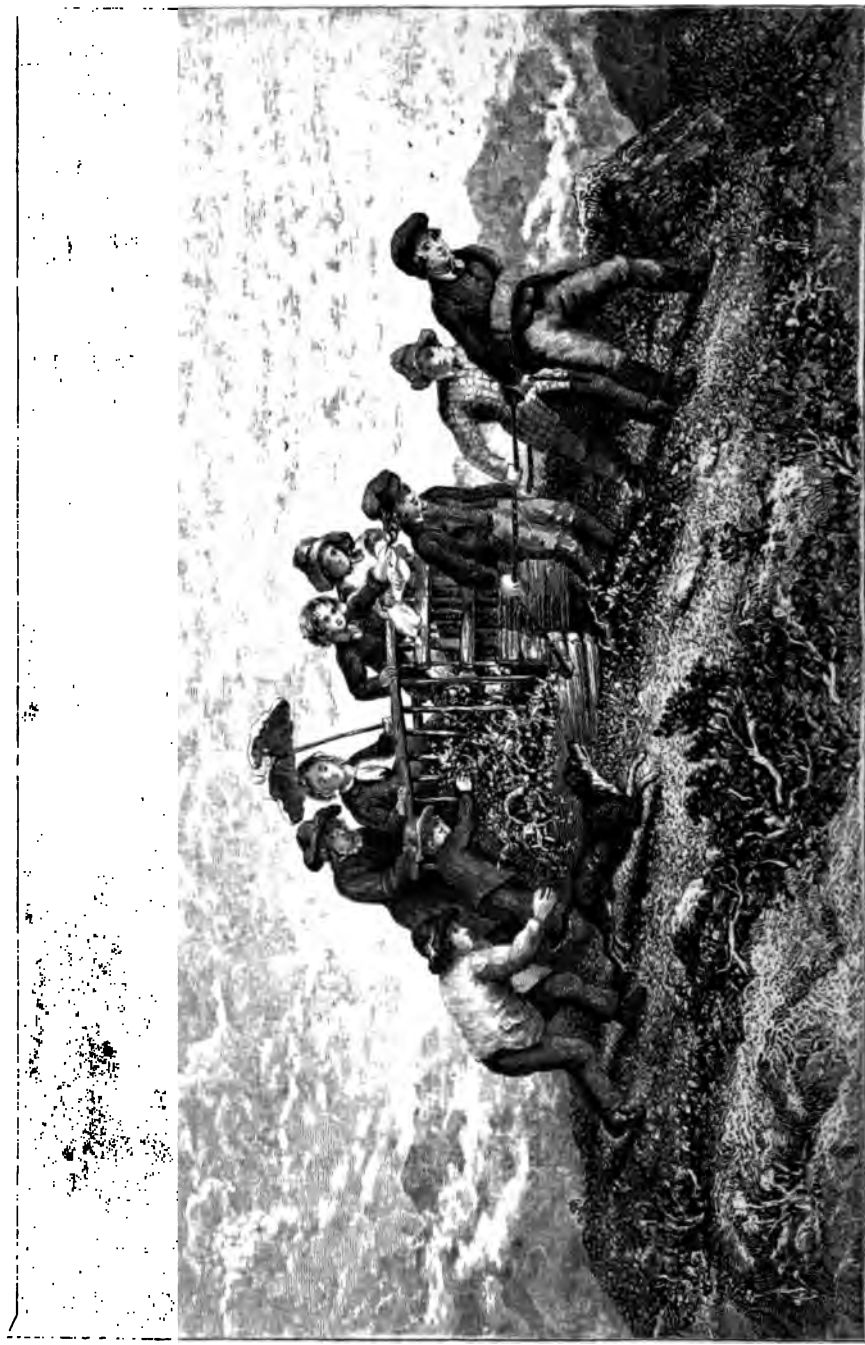
was accustomed to during the Scottish winter, no wonder he often wished himself back at Eldmuir. Alternate days of rain and sunshine succeeded each other as the autumn advanced, and the rich colours that adorned the landscape were only admired by the fierce soldiery as affording cover to the differently dressed marksmen. In November the great battle of the Nivelle was fought and won by the British. Here Duncan first beheld the terrible scenes that accompany an engagement—the dead and dying mingled in helpless confusion; here and there a wounded horse adding with convulsive plunges to the sufferings of those in its vicinity; the sad task of collecting the wounded; and the still sadder one of burying the dead. These things were sufficient to spread a gloom over his mind and tinge his brightest hopes with a feeling of uncertainty. Whatever Duncan felt, however, in his letters to his wife he betrayed nothing that could occasion her uneasiness, and Jamie's humorous sayings even in the midst of danger and privation often gave a turn to his thoughts that suggested a pleasant conclusion to his epistles.

Two thousand six hundred and ninety-four men and officers had fallen on the banks of the Nivelle, and Duncan scanned anxiously the features of all who wore the tartan of the 42nd, but no sight or tidings of Steenie were obtained. Engagements with the enemy now followed rapidly, and, ere the year closed, Wellington had crossed the Nive and on several occasions defeated the French before Bayonne, Arcangues, and Barouillet, after which followed the sanguinary battle of St. Pierre. During the defence of Barouillet the 92nd had been hotly engaged, but Duncan and Jamie providentially escaped unhurt. It was in the battle of St. Pierre that the 92nd distinguished itself by engaging and com-

pletely routing an overwhelming force of the enemy. The Highlanders never counted odds when opposed to the French, and hence, the temerity of their charges against such superior numbers from the courage they displayed, rather than the power they brought into action, often resulted in success.

During January, 1814, the allies were continually engaged in repelling petty attacks of the French, and maintaining their own position, but in February the triumphant hosts of the British passed from the long-contested frontier into France, and became successful invaders of that powerful country. There were hard knocks for all at the passages of the Gaves and Adour. At Garris the 92nd were again honourably mentioned, having by their quickness and intrepidity secured the passage of the Mauleon Gave, and saved the bridge of Arriverette. Then succeeded the great battle of Orthes, the combats of Aire, the Garonne, Vie Bigorre, Tarbes, and finally Toulouse, where the Highlanders were all but cut to pieces, and added, if possible, more lustre to their already valiant name. At last came a respite and rest for these hard-wrought soldiers of Britain, "who had carried the red cross through so many perils, had won nineteen pitched battles and innumerable smaller combats, sustained sieges, captured fortresses, twice expelled the French from Portugal and once from Spain, and who had left 40,000 of their countrymen dead on the plains of the Peninsula." In April Duncan and Jamie, with the remains of their own regiment, embarked in several vessels from Bordeaux, and were shortly afterwards once more landed on the shores of England.





W. H. BARNARD.

*THE NIGHT OF AMBERG.*

JAMES TOWNSEND.

## CHAPTER XII.

" Yet, Caledonia, beloved are thy mountains,  
Round their white summits though elements war,  
Though cataracts foam, 'stead of smooth flowing fountains,  
I sigh for the valley of dark Loch-na-garr."

BYRON.

GREAT were the rejoicings throughout the kingdom when peace was proclaimed, and her hardy sons returned once more from the toils and hardships of their long campaign. When the news reached Eldmuir, the villagers kept holiday, shaking hands when they met with a cordiality that showed, if they had not been actors in those many and painful struggles for mastery over the Corsican General, they were at least able to estimate the blessings accruing to the nation from a return of peace. Jean's joy was as exuberant as her grief had been deep and enduring. Though she might not yet hope for reunion with her husband, it was pleasant to reflect that he was no longer exposed to danger or the chances of sudden death. Duncan wrote hopefully, sharing with his comrades the joyful anticipation that if the peace proved lasting, their regiment would be ordered North, and they would again behold the heath-covered mountains of their native land. Some of the brave soldiers, however, whose exploits had long been the talk of Europe, were not so fortunate. Peace was no sooner

declared on the continent, than the American revolution broke out, necessitating the presence of British forces in that country, and several regiments embarked from Bordeaux for Quebec. The 92nd and 42nd Highlanders, however, returned to England, and were stationed at Chatham until their ranks should be recruited, in daily expectation of being ordered to Edinburgh or Stirling.

The summer of 1814 had proved one of great prosperity at Eldmuir. Fergus, who seemed to have grown young again, became unusually active about his farm. Old Janet recovered sufficiently to take a busy part in household matters, and to assist Jean, whose happiness was increased by the reaction from so much misery and suspense as she had endured. Little Jeanie and Donald became more attached to each other; and Jessie, now nearly two years old, was able to run about the house. Often the elder children would snugly ensconce little Jessie among the bracken, and there she, with the sheep dog curled up at her feet, would watch with delight the many gambols of her guardians. Jean, generally remarking that the "fine weather was a blessing, as it kept the children out of doors, where they gained health and strength as well as amusement." Billy, the goat, had grown too big to be played with and pulled about as formerly, so one of his offspring was given to the children for a pet, and underwent the youthful experience of his sire. Thus they spent the warm days of summer, and autumn came steadily on. Happy were the children when roaming among the green lanes, and scrambling through the hedges seeking hazel-nuts, haws, and bramble-berries—happier still when they could accompany old Fergus with two or three sturdy village lads over the fells, to bring home the dry heather for winter







use; but beyond and above all, it was their "Height of Ambition" to ride back triumphantly on the last sledge load that returned to the village in the gloaming. What adventures these were to the children! especially when the active imagination of Donald invented stories out of legendary scraps, and village tales in which they were all included. Never to be forgotten was that last time but one, when the laden sledge overturned and its gleeful occupants were sent sprawling headlong, but unhurt, amongst the heather! Loud and long rang the merry laughter, till it provoked and put to flight the general good nature of old Fergus, who, seeing in the trouble thus occasioned, more of disaster than food for mirth, took the opportunity of reading the little ones a lecture, which probably was his first, and certainly was his last, occasion of being in any way severe with them. "Deils in the bairns," he said, "daffing and skirling as if a coupéd sled was nae mair nor a bit toy for their ain amusement. I was young mysell once, bairns, and may be could ha'e laughed as lang as ony, but ye mun see it's just gi'en yer old grannie a heap o' wark to set up and load the sled again; sae dinna laugh—dinna laugh, its just a lesson to ye, and may be worth remembering; for with all yer blessings and promise o' happy life, it's aye human to be proud, and this is no' the first time my auld eyes have witnessed the downfa' o' pride." Perhaps the memory of one who might be sleeping his last long sleep on the plains of the Peninsula, called forth that solitary tear that rolled down the old man's cheek as he thus spoke.

Donald, now grown a big boy, would sometimes resolve to be a soldier, but that was only for a couple of days after a letter had arrived from Duncan, or a newspaper had reached Alister; then the restless feeling which accompanies the born sailor from the cradle to the grave,

would come over him, and his discarded ships began again to make their voyages across the burn.

As the winter approached money was received from Duncan, which, though not absolutely needed, was welcome, as affording the means of repaying Mistress Barbara for the garments she had supplied the previous year. It was only then that Jean became aware that the articles had been purchased with Duncan's "bounty money," which she had so indignantly refused. Much chagrined at first, but ending by fully acquiescing in the thoughtfulness displayed, Jean was as gratified as if the things had been presented by Mistress Barbara herself. Thus the winter went by without misfortune or sickness, and as 1815 crept on, vague rumours of fresh wars reached the village, and shortly afterwards there came a letter from Duncan which turned their short-lived joy into deeper sorrow than before. Napoleon had escaped from Elba, and being again at the head of affairs in France, threatened with his ambitious projects the peace of Europe. The English army was being concentrated on the Continent, and by the time this intelligence was received at Eldmuir, the Highland regiments were *en route* for Flanders. The terrible news fell like a thunderclap on Jean's newly awakened hopes; she carried the letter to her friend at the manse, and, throwing herself into a chair, despairingly exclaimed, "My burden is greater than I can bear!"

Barbara, compassionating Jean's distress, and unable to restrain her own tears, endeavoured to speak words of comfort and hope, by replying tenderly, "Nothing is too hard to bear, Jean. Did you never read that the darkest cloud has often a silver lining? If we had nothing but *joy* on earth we might see nothing to desire in heaven; and if all that we asked for were given, we

might come in time to forget the giver. 'Weeping may endure for a night, but joy cometh in the morning.'" Barbara strove long to bring composure over the disturbed spirit of her friend, but Jean would not be comforted. Time is the only consoler for sorrow such as she now experienced.

Meanwhile Duncan and Jamie were embarked, and hasting towards the scene of strife. During their short passage to Flushing several officers' wives, accompanying their husbands, busied themselves amongst the troops, inquiring into their necessities, and relieving them when possible. One of those who, actuated by high and noble motives, thus engaged themselves in works of charity, was the daughter of an English nobleman, Lady Maud, wife of a captain in Ponsonby's Dragoons, who, not ashamed to go amongst the rank and file of the army, extended a ready sympathy to all, and gave liberally whenever circumstances called for her generosity. This lady had taken great interest in Duncan and Jamie. The former she had discovered, to her great joy, was imbued with a religious spirit; and, when she had learned his past history, she spoke feelingly to him of his wife and children, assuring him they should not be forgotten in case any fatality occurred to him, at the same time cheered him with a pleasing picture of their future happy reunion. She also supplied them with many comforts, of which Duncan had voluntarily deprived himself in order that he might send more money to Jean, and in which Jamie had disinterestedly assisted him. Besides being so truly good, Lady Maud was a more than ordinarily beautiful woman, and this circumstance increased her popularity with the troops, who, for her many kind and charitable actions, adored her more than all others. Her beneficence did not cease with the short voyage

across to Belgium, but often afterwards she would visit the encampment on the banks of the Scheldt, doing all in her power to add to the comfort of the men. The Highlanders, as well as the troopers of her husband's regiment, shared in her bounty ; and once, when Duncan was emboldened to speak to her rather familiarly and ask her "How it was that a fine leddy could be sae unmindfu' o' her own comforts, and do gude to the puir sojer lads wha sae few cared for?" she replied, in a kindly voice and with a sweet smile, "Well, Duncan, a fond and loving mother, now I trust in heaven, taught me, when I was quite a little child, to repeat the words, 'What-soever ye would that men should do unto you, do ye even so to them.' She taught me also that the rich are but stewards of God's bounty, and should care for the needs of the poor. She, my mother, lived according to those precepts, and, as she can never be forgotten by her child, neither can her wishes ever be neglected. I am rich now, Duncan, but the day may come when I shall be poor ; and, while we enjoy our lives in safety, should we not endeavour to cheer those of our brave defenders who, in exposing themselves to death, ensure us that safety ? You may yet do more for me, perhaps, than ever I have done for you," added the lady, smiling, as she turned away. Duncan never forgot her words, nor the short prayer she taught him on board the vessel during the earlier part of their acquaintance.

As the spring passed the troops continued in camp ; but at the close of May the division marched to Brussels, and were quartered in different parts of the city. Duncan had long since given up all hopes of finding Steenie, and had made no inquiries since they left England, for he imagined (correctly or not time will show) that, as he was not with the regiment when they left Bor-

deaux, he could not possibly be in it now. At midnight, on the 15th of June, the drums beat to arms, and the clamorous trumpets sounded the *reveillé* from several points; and at daybreak the troops were assembled and marched, with all possible despatch, to Quatre Bras, distant eighteen miles. The Highlanders were first on the field, and, though not the first to attack the enemy, it is certain that the allied armies had not gained any decided advantage until the furious charge of the heroic Celts drove back the massive centre columns of the French.

The Scottish regiments, if not actually the most active and victorious heroes of the day, were certainly amongst the foremost. Duncan's regiment performed the astounding feat of receiving cavalry in line, and defeating it by a well-directed discharge from the rear-rank, which faced about for the purpose. The battles of Quatre Bras and Ligny are, however, events of history, which have been too well and often described to need repetition, and it is enough for our story to record that Duncan and Jamie escaped from the fearful slaughter in which so many of their brave comrades fell on the afternoon of the 17th of June. After a long and toilsome march through knee-deep swamps, they halted for the night, without tents or baggage, on the open plains near Waterloo.

### CHAPTER XIII.

“Last noon beheld them full of lusty life,  
Last eve in beauty's circle proudly gay ;  
The midnight brought the signal-sound of strife ;  
The morn, the marshalling in arms ; the day  
Battle's magnificently stern array.”

BYRON.

“THE rye strae wad'na be sae bad if it was a wheen drier, and we had but a roof ower it,” said Jamie to Duncan, as the two lay close together in a field of growing corn, striving to adjust their plaids so as to derive as much warmth from them as possible. Sleep was out of the question. Their feelings, excited by the terrible scenes they had passed through at Quatre Bras, added to the anxiety which none could suppress regarding the probable issue of the morrow, served to banish all ideas of slumber ; and, though weary and exhausted, but few of the hardy mountaineers who occupied these exposed and drenched quarters, enjoyed the blessings of repose.

“Many a one,” said Duncan, “who is trying now to get a wink of sleep, will be sound enough to-morrow night, and the Lord knows if it may not be our own fate, Jamie.”

“Even sae,” replied Jamie ; “and we ought to be prepared for't. It's no sae much matter for me, Duncan ; for there's none to greet, though Jamie Steenson was

knocked doon, and left amang the bonnie men that will be aye chuckit intil big pits, and forgotten when the battle's ower; but O, I pray that you may escape baith for yer ain sake and for them that will lose sae muckle, if you fa'. D'ye mind that bit prayer the captain's wife taught us in the vessel coming ower? The chieils might say it's no manly to be fretting and praying just before the battle; but I trow the Frenchers' bullets will no leave muckle time to say them afterwards."

Duncan's eyes were full of tears as he repeated in a low and broken voice the short prayer which had been taught them. Doubtless these two were not the only warriors whose thoughts turned heavenward on the eve of the battle, for there were many men to be found among the ranks of the Highland regiments in whom lingered the stern religious spirit of the covenanters, that once persecuted people, to whom a well-known poet thus alludes :—

" Their faces grew pale, and their swords were unsheathed,  
But the vengeance that darkened their brow was unbreathed,  
With eyes turned to heaven in calm resignation,  
They sung their last song to the God of salvation."

Weary and anxious were the hours of that melancholy night, the last night on earth to thousands of the brave soldiers of Britain, and to those whom they were on the morrow to meet in deadly struggle. The day seemed long in breaking, and the dawn was rendered more tardy by the drizzling rain that obscured the heavens.

The morning of the 18th of June, memorable in the annals of history, was ushered in by the shrill tones of the bagpipes rousing the dauntless sons of the Gael from their comfortless couches. One spirit and one heart in unison with the strains of music that had sounded over



many a hard-fought field in the days of their ancestors, animated the ranks of the tartan-clad warriors. Stiff with their previous fatigue, and wearied rather than refreshed by their vain attempts at rest during the cold wet night, the hardy Scotsmen sprang with alacrity to their feet and girded on their arms; an indomitable courage being strongly and visibly impressed on every brow, and bravery and determination glancing from eyes that surveyed the glittering battalions of their enemies, as if proud to be matched with such worthy combatants. Duncan and Jamie, with a hearty clasp of the hand, took their places side by side prepared, come what would, to do their duty. As the morning advanced, the clouds that had so long hung heavily and ominously over the country, discharging the rain which had rendered the low grounds almost impassable, became lighter, and occasionally the sun shone out in fitful gleams that cheered the men by their bright presage. "Never," says the great historian of Waterloo, "was a nobler spectacle witnessed than both armies now exhibited; its magnificence struck even the Peninsular and Imperial veterans with a feeling of awe. The troops gazed on each other with respect mingled with surprise. A stern joy was felt in hearts on both sides at the noble aspect of their antagonists." From the summit of a row of gentle eminences occupied by the English army, a splendid view of that field which was so soon to be the scene of deadly conflict, was gained—a conflict that was to terminate the long series of destructive wars that had raged so many years.

The field of Waterloo, it may be well to record, extends about two miles from the old château, gardens, and enclosures of Hougoumont on the right, to the hamlet of La Haye on the left. The plain is intersected by the high road which leads from Brussels to Charleroi, passing

nearly a mile to the southward of the village of Waterloo, and in front of the farm house, Mont St. Jean. On this memorable position the British lines were placed, so that this road cut directly through their centre, thence pursuing the direction of La Belle Alliance, and the hamlet of Rossomme. The night of the 17th was spent by Napoleon at Rossomme, and he is said to have been apprehensive lest the British forces should retreat during the darkness. So confident was this extraordinary man of the ultimate success of his now almost hopeless cause, that thus, on the eve of utter defeat, he beheld with joy as the morning disclosed their position, the serried ranks of his enemies arranged in battle order.

"I have them these English," said he. "They exceed us by a quarter of their forces, but, nevertheless, nine chances out of ten are in our favour."

"Sire!" replied Soult, "I know these English, they will die on the ground on which they stand before they lose it."

We are not, however, about to write the history of the battle of Waterloo, but only to follow the adventures of our present hero, by recounting some of the incidents of the great contest wherein the gallant 92nd was more immediately engaged.

Picton's division, in which was comprised Pack's brigade, consisting of the 1st royals, 42nd, 44th, and 92nd, occupied a position at the left of the British lines near La Haye Sainte, and were for some time almost inactive spectators of the early part of the battle. It is well known how simultaneously with the village clock of Nivelles striking eleven the first shot was fired from the French centre, succeeded by a heavy discharge of musketry from the left. Next followed the brave defence of Hougoumont by the foot guards and the men of

Brunswick and Nassau, where some of the hardest fighting of the day took place. The slight cover afforded by each tree, bush, and even sapling in the wood, was ably contested, and only abandoned when rendered untenable by the hail of balls, that the French directed against this position. The British at one time lost all the advantages secured to them by the shelter of the old château and gardens, but with determined courage Woodford's guards regained much that had been abandoned and retained their position during the remainder of the day.

This assault, however, though vehement and well sustained, was but a feint to conceal the real point of attack, which was entrusted to Marshal Ney, with D'Erlon's corps 2400 strong. This formidable body prepared to attack on the left, Ponsonby's brigade of horse, consisting of the 1st dragoon guards, the Scotch greys, and Inniskillens, being drawn up in rear of Picton's division, which was now about to be hotly engaged.

The first infantry lines consisted of Perponcher's Belgians, who gave way, and, without exchanging a shot, fled in a dastardly manner.

Excited to madness at this sight, the Highlanders could with difficulty be restrained from firing upon their cowardly companions as they passed to the rear. Their indignation, however, was happily diverted by the order to advance, which they did with a loud, ringing cheer, and poured in such a close and well-directed volley on the ranks of the enemy, that these, the flower of the French army, recoiled in disorder. "Charge! Charge! Hurrah!" shouted Picton, waving on his troops to the attack. Well did the Highlanders respond to his call! firing once more on the broken masses of the foes, which, however, rapidly closed up to receive them, they resorted to the

bayonet, and rushed onward with an impetuosity not to be resisted.

It was a charge of unexampled bravery and resolution, but, alas! he who gave the order lived not to see it carried bravely out. Already wounded—some say mortally—at Quatre Bras, the noble Picton had concealed this fact, in order to be present at the decisive battle which he knew was impending. He lived to behold his devoted soldiers true to their old spirit and courage, which was almost legendary, bearing down upon an enemy far superior in numbers and equal in discipline, without one thought but the certainty of victory. He may have regarded with infinite sorrow the plumed bonnets dropping in numbers among the fast thinning ranks, strewing the plain with the bravest of the brave, but he saw no more. Shot through the heart, the heroic Picton fell from his charger amongst the dying and the dead!

## CHAPTER XIV.

“Our bugles sang truce, for the night-cloud had lowered,  
And the sentinel stars set their watch in the sky,  
And thousands had sunk on the ground overpowered;  
The weary to sleep and the wounded to die.”

CAMPBELL.

THE fall of Picton served as a signal for the brigade of horsemen to charge, and avenge the loss of their leader. Recklessly they bounded forward, and ere the 92nd could obey the quick order of Kempt—who had now taken the command—to wheel back in sections, and open a passage for the cavalry, the heavy squadrons of the Greys broke through their now thinned and somewhat disordered ranks. Numbers went down beneath the hoofs of the horses, which appeared to be animated with the vindictive spirit of their riders.

“Scotland for ever!” shouted Jamie, as he and Duncan bounded into the midst of the foe, whose polished cuirasses afforded but slender defence against the bayonets of the Highlanders. Poor Jamie! that patriotic shout was his last on earth, for almost immediately after, struck by a powerful charger in full career, the unfortunate lad was hurled amid the heaps of fallen that encumbered the ground. Duncan had no time, even if it had been possible, to extricate the body of his comrade. Squadron after squadron passed over the spot, *and probably many beside Jamie, spared hitherto from the*

balls of their enemies, were destined to fall victims to the intemperate zeal of their friends.

"A' didna think you would hae sarved us sae," exclaimed Duncan, seizing hold of a dragoon's stirrup-iron to assist himself forward.

"Come on," cried the lowland soldier. "There's nae time for lamenting, and it may be oor ain turn neist."

The words were hardly spoken ere the grey horse bounded on riderless, and Duncan was prostrated by the fall of the soldier upon him. Unhurt by his tumble, he extricated himself from beneath the body of his late companion, who was quite dead. The tide of battle rolled on, leaving him somewhat in the rear, and when he had time to look around him, the first thing that arrested his attention was the frantic, but as yet unsuccessful, attempts of an officer, apparently of high rank, to disengage himself from the body of his horse, which had been shot under him. His endeavours were impeded by the necessity of defending himself from the attacks of two dismounted French dragoons, who probably conceiving from the richness of his uniform, that he was an officer of importance, were intent on wounding, preparatory to taking him prisoner.

"Fie on you," cried Duncan, "two to one! and that a fallen man! here's a lad says nay to that, and there's one for you," inflicting a severe wound on the nearest assailant, which at once disabled his sword-arm. "Sacre!" cried the other, engaging instantly with the brave Highlander, whose utmost skill was needed to avoid the heavy blows of the sabre borne by the dragoon. For a few moments the two combatants were engaged in deadly strife, Duncan being under the necessity of defending himself from the annoyance occasioned by his first antagonist, who attacked him behind with

his sword in the left hand. The contest was unequal, but the sturdy Gael's blood was up, and the Frenchman, brave and skilful as he undoubtedly was, proved no match for the "barbarian," as the bare-legged Celts were called by their enemies. A slip of the foot on the grass gave Duncan an advantage over his opponent, and the Frenchman fell pierced to the heart by the bayonet of the Highlander.

"Go away home!" said Duncan, with grave nonchalance turning to his other and partially disabled foe, "and tell your friends that a Scotsman cannot fight a man with one hand."

The Frenchman did not understand him, but discerning, with native quickness, that his brave opponent disdained to take advantage of his defenceless position, threw down his sabre, and taking Duncan's hand, exclaimed, with tears in his eyes, "Monsieur Ecossais, vous êtes un brave gentilhomme." Then, hasting away, he sought, if possible, to regain the retreating ranks of his countrymen.

"And now, sir," said Duncan, turning to the officer, "are you wounded?"

"Not at all," replied the gentleman, who had been an attentive, and notwithstanding his critical position, an admiring spectator of the late combat. "Help me out from under this cursed horse, my good man, and I will soon be to the front again."

"Don't swear, sir," said Duncan seriously. "The poor beast has that in his throat!" pointing to a bullet-hole in the horse's neck. "That would make any of us lie quiet enough, I'll warrant you."

Duncan having assisted him to his feet, the officer looked upon him at first with a shade of annoyance, which arose probably from having been thus spoken to and

rebuked by a private. This feeling, however, was speedily banished, and succeeded by nobler sentiments.

“Your hand, my brave friend!” he said with emotion. “You have saved my life, and if we both escape this dreadful day the service you have rendered me shall never be forgotten. Your name, friend. Quick, for we have no time for much talking?”

“Just Duncan Campbell, of the 92nd,” replied the soldier.

“Farewell! God keep you, my noble preserver!” said the officer. “I trust through Him some day to testify my gratitude, but now I must see if I can catch another horse and rejoin the division.”

“There’s plenty of them beasts running about,” said Duncan when he saw the officer was successful and again mounted. “Ay, there’s more without nor with riders on them this day, and it’s a sad job for poor Jamie that any of them were here at all; but I must see what our lads are about, or they’ll be firing on me for a deserter.”

Duncan turned to rejoin his comrades, who, now reduced to a mere handful, were still fighting bravely in the front, horse and foot in almost inextricable confusion; but he had not taken many steps in this direction when a spent ball struck him upon the ancle. Though for a few moments he did not think himself seriously wounded, or even disabled, the pain increased so suddenly and severely that he sank on the ground, where for a short time he lost all consciousness. As the sickly faintness wore off he attempted to rise and push forward but the pain returned and compelled him to remain in his recumbent position. Perceiving that blood was flowing freely from his shoe, he tore a strip from his plaid, and had scarce bound up the injured limb when he heard some one, apparently in great agony, exclaiming, “Water!—water!—



for the love of Heaven." It was not the petition which ascended from hundreds of parched lips on that fatal day that arrested his attention, but there was something in the tones and accents, though changed by suffering, which touched the chord of memory in Duncan's bosom. "Good God!" he exclaimed, "I have heard that voice before."

Several bodies of the fallen intervened between him and the spot from whence the cries proceeded, but, struggling with some difficulty over these, he looked upon a scene which almost caused his heart to cease its beating. In a little hollow, with his head resting upon a stone, lay a tall Highlander. He wore the well-known tartan of the 42nd, and had evidently received a mortal wound, for the hues of death had already stamped their impress on his handsome face. His plumed bonnet had fallen off, and the auburn locks were scattered in wild confusion, falling over his brow and partially hiding his features. But a brother's eye was not to be deceived by the alteration which time, exposure, and agony had made in those well-remembered lineaments. He crept to his side and laid his hand lightly on the fallen soldier's breast, as though to assure himself that his heart was not stilled for ever; then, bending down, he whispered softly into his ear, "Steenie!" and the dying man answered, "Duncan!"

The brothers had met at last; but, oh, how sad this meeting?—one wounded and almost hopeless of succour, and the other dying. The poor man, by a convulsive movement of the arm, managed to point to his parched and swollen lips, to which further utterance was denied. Happily, Duncan understood this slight action; he raised himself to his knees and looked searchingly around, saying the while, "Oh that I had a loggie-full of the water

from the burn that's running to waste over father's old mill-dam—it might save my poor brother's life; or if some of the rain that fashed us so yesterday would but fall now! but it will not, and there's nothing but blood wherever you look." Then, starting, he exclaimed, "Now, God be praised for all His mercies; this one above all." He had caught sight of one of those wooden bottles, or canteens, used by some of the French regiments, in which to carry their rations of wine. This one hung from the neck of a fallen *Tirailleur*, but the unfortunate man would never more need it, so Duncan with some difficulty disengaged it from the thongs by which it was suspended, and bore it joyfully to the side of his wounded brother. Moistening his lips with a few drops of the liquid, he succeeded at length in getting the sufferer to swallow a little, and this seemed instantly to revive him. A faint colour returned to his cheeks, and in a short time he was able to speak without much effort.

"O Duncan!" said he, "and is it thus we meet at last? but what brings you here? has there been mourning and trouble at home?"

"No," replied Duncan, "but perhaps my own stubbornness has led me to come away and leave those I should not have done. But I have been long seeking you, Steenie. I have sought you far and wide for nigh on three years, and could get no tidings of you anywhere, and so I gave up the search."

"I was a prisoner," said Steenie, "long—so long—years perhaps—and when the war was over and I got back to England I dared not write, for I didn't know who was living or who was dead. I always thought to get away and go home; but then the route came for us to this country, and so—and so—" The colour once more faded from Steenie's cheeks, and it appeared as if

his last words were uttered. Duncan, however, administered more wine, which enabled his brother to speak.

"Oh," said Duncan, "if I could but get you away from this. There's surgeons in the rear, if help would only come; but, indeed, our lads have much to do to care for themselves, let alone helping the wounded."

"You could do nothing for me," said Steenie; "a shot has gone through my back, and if you but move me all would soon be over; but—I have much to say and little time to say it—and its growing cold—cold." The dying man paused for a moment, and then, endeavouring to turn his head so as to look Duncan in the face, he continued, "There are things you must do, Duncan, if it's the Lord's will that you get home to the old country. There's a bit lassie in Edinbro' I would have you seek for. She—loved me well." A tear stole quietly down the pallid cheek, and his voice grew weak and faltering. "She was our sergeant's daughter, and her mother wrote a letter for me long ago—do you remember, Duncan?"

"I remember it well," replied his brother.

"Mary and I had plighted our troth, Duncan. She'll maybe have forgotten me now, but I have not forgotten her. She gave me this." He strove to pull something from under his plaid, but was unequal to the task. Duncan, however, preventing him, drew from the breast of his jacket a little pocket Bible.

It fell open in his hand, and the part thus exposed to view bore marks of having been often read. It was much worn and stained, and in many places there were marks of tears that had been shed upon it.

At one place, written in pencil, but now nearly illegible, were the two letters "M. M." They stood *beside* the first verse of the Seventh Psalm, and Duncan

read the words, "O Lord my God, in thee do I put my trust."

"Tell her," said Steenie, who anxiously noticed every action of his brother, "I have done that ever since—tell her that I died in the faith she herself taught me—and that I look to meeting her again—yonder." He paused; the wine which Duncan continued to administer seemed to have no longer power to sustain the failing energies of the dying soldier. Shortly afterwards he said, "Tell mother that I have learned to trust in the Lord ever since that sorrowful day when I went away from all who loved me, and became a wanderer over the face of the earth." His voice was almost inaudible now, and Duncan, stooping down and placing his ear close to his brother's lips, could just distinguish the words, "Lord Jesus—have—mercy—bless—Mary." As he uttered the name so dear to him, his eyes became fixed and expressionless, and Steenie went to his long home.

Duncan sank insensible by the lifeless body of his brother, whom he had sought so long and found only to lose for ever.

The Highland tartans were thickly strewn on the field of Waterloo that day. Men's faces were upturned to heaven, but they saw not and spoke not. They died as they had lived, staunch upholders of their country's honour. The frown that had accompanied the last blow ere the death-stroke ended their wrath and animosity for ever, remained on the pale brow still; the smile that perchance the memory of a fond mother had evoked was left on the quiet face undisturbed; anger, defiance, disdain, triumph, sorrow, and agony—all were written there, as if in mockery of Death; and then the shadows of the night descended, enveloping all in one gloomy shroud. Ever and anon there flashed through the dark-

ness some solitary gun, whose mission of anger and death was not yet ended—then from a distance was heard the sullen roar of the cannonade, proclaiming the victory of right—the return of peace—and—this was their requiem.

## CHAPTER XV.

“ For the Angel of Death spread his wings on the blast  
And breathed on the face of the foe as he passed,  
And the eyes of the sleepers waxed deadly and chill,  
And their hearts but once heaved and for ever grew still.”

BYRON.

THERE had fallen a deep unearthly silence over the field of battle, whereon the dead and wounded lay mingled together. The silence was not the utter absence of sound, for groans extorted by agony and thirst broke ever and anon from the heaving bosom of some fallen warrior; but it was a silence to be felt, and that was occasioned by the awful presence of Death! The moonlight gave a weird and ghastly appearance to the cold white faces of those whose spirits were beyond recall, and the stars looked down pityingly on the sad scene below—so different in all its painful features was it from the calm and serene aspect of the blue heaven above. Ah! if some spotless, happy being, the habitant of a world unstained by sin, could look down and behold a scene like that, forming a huge crimson blot on the beautiful surface of our gloriously created planet, what an idea of infatuation it would receive! What wonder that, all regardless of the anger of offended Heaven, such puny creatures, ephemera of a day, should thus destroy each other, and wantonly shorten their brief period of existence.

Some day we are fain to believe, wars will cease for ever ; but that time is far distant, and beings constituted as we are must have undergone a wonderful moral change ere we are fitted to dwell under the benign and heavenly reign of Peace.

The cold night dew roused poor Duncan from his long swoon. For a time he seemed to remember nothing—all was a wild and dreadful dream—but the pain he endured when he attempted to move his wounded limb, recalled too vividly the past events. He gazed upon the pale, rigid features of his brother, whereon he could yet trace the smile of hope that had accompanied his last sigh. The contraction of the muscles drawing harsh lines around the mouth, had not utterly banished the peaceful expression that reposed there, while, in faltering accents, he had committed her whom he loved to the Redeemer's care.

Duncan felt utterly miserable ; a burning thirst oppressed him, and the canteen out of which he had obtained the wine for his dying brother, was empty. He felt as if he too were dying, and all the scenes of by-gone days—his childhood, his parents, the village, and the forms of his beloved wife and children, passed before him with wondrous reality. No one would know how the brothers had died ! They would be lost in the common grave with hundreds of others who had shared their fate ; and their last resting-place would soon be overgrown and forgotten. Years would pass away, and on that place where the great reaper Death had gathered in such a mighty harvest, succeeding generations would gather their harvests of golden grain, and the busy reapers would sing their merry carols, utterly forgetful of those who were sleeping a long, long sleep beneath.

At length a blaze of torchlight and the sound of voices

drawing near disturbed Duncan's painful meditations. The noise also aroused other wounded men lying there from the apathy into which suffering and loss of blood had plunged them. As the torches came towards them Duncan perceived that they were borne by English soldiers forming a fatigue party, engaged in collecting the wounded. They were hurrying over their task, bearing away on litters the sufferers, and placing them in the ambulances which were standing upon the road.

Duncan implored them to remove Steenie also, but the sergeant of the party ascertaining that he was already dead, refused to do so. "No!" said he, "there are hundreds lying about who need our care, and that quickly. For this one we can do nothing. The dead will all be buried in the morning." Duncan was thus obliged to submit, and after he had been carried to the surgeon's tent for the purpose of having his wound dressed, he, and several others, whose injuries were not too severe to permit of their being removed at once, were despatched to Brussels, where, in a convent hastily appropriated to hospital purposes, he remained for a considerable period.

His wound, though trifling compared to many, was, nevertheless, extremely painful, and, fever supervening, the sick man became delirious, and for weeks lay utterly unconscious of the lapse of time; a robust constitution, aided by the assiduous care of his nurses, however, at length succeeded in bringing about his recovery. These nurses were mostly *Sœurs de Charité*—those worthiest of women who are ever ready to alleviate suffering, and mitigate distress, whenever it lies in their power, irrespective altogether of creed or nationality. When he became cognizant of external things, Duncan



discovered that he was lying in a long apartment with a low vaulted roof, and narrow Gothic windows reaching from floor to ceiling. Although it was dark and gloomy in the corner where his pallet was situated, in the afternoon the sun shone through a small oriel casement directly upon him, and just at that time there came to his bedside one—who for many reasons, but most of all for her beauty and kindness—he well remembered. It was the captain's wife who had taken so much interest in him and his family since his departure from England, and who had so often and so benevolently assisted him. She was changed—sadly changed—from what she had been. Her cheeks, once so blooming, were now pale, and her dark eyes, once so eloquent, were sunken and dim. She had evidently suffered much mental agony, and wore the appearance of one whose strength had been overtaken with watching through weary nights by the side of the sick and suffering; and so it was, for her husband had been brought in seriously wounded, and needed all her care and unremitting attention; and the sorrow and anxiety she had undergone had been almost too much for a frame so delicately nurtured as hers.

On her first visit to Duncan, Lady Maud came gently up to his bedside, and while she congratulated him on his recovery, whispered to him the welcome news that his friends had been made aware of his merciful escape, and bid to look for a speedy meeting with him again.

The poor man's eyes filled with tears as she told him this, and he could only exclaim, "God bless you, lady," when she departed, having, however, administered a cordial in these few words, which was calculated to do more for the patient than all the physic in the dispensary could have effected.

Duncan as he lay watched with interest the variously coloured light that fell upon the coverlet of his bed, as the glowing sunbeams stole in through the painted glass of the window above him. The figure of some old saint with a halo of glory around his head was there portrayed, and the sick man seemed to make acquaintance with this relic of a superstitious age. As day by day, at the same hour, his fair friend invariably visited him, sometimes staying a while to read, now from the Holy Bible, now from some interesting volume, Duncan began to associate these eventful periods, which relieved the irksomeness of the day's monotony with the illumination of the saint. All the morning the figure was dark and dingy, but as soon as the hour of noon had tolled, it began to grow transparent, gradually getting brighter and more distinct, until at last the glory-crowned head was all ablaze with sunshine. Then it was that the lady came. When the days were gloomy and the figure did not show out favourably, Duncan became miserable, for though his friend arrived as usual, he was disappointed in not being able, almost to the minute, to foretell her appearance—so it is that trifling things like these are joys and sorrows to the sick and suffering when long confined.

Duncan had learned to call his painted companion St. John, and expressed much delight when the lady read from the Beloved Disciple's Gospel, that beautiful story beginning,—

“Now, a certain man was sick, named Lazarus, of Bethany, the town of Mary, and her sister Martha.” Once he ventured to tell her of Steenie. The narrative so affected the lady that she could not restrain her tears, and this incident greatly raised her in the estimation of Duncan—so intensely do the poor appreciate genuine sympathy from those they are accustomed to consider

as far removed from, and as caring but little about, themselves.

"This," said the lady, "explains many expressions that escaped you during the delirium of fever, and which I could not understand. However, I mentioned them to the minister you told me of, and he will inform your friends and parents as much as he thinks best, or withhold it altogether until your return."

"Oh, lady!" replied Duncan, "you are always thoughtful and kind, and surely God will bless you for it; but I fear it will be many a long day before I see the hills of Scotland again: I will soon be fit for duty, and if the war is over here, they will find enough to fight about somewhere else."

"That has also been cared for, Duncan," said his friend, "and if it will assist you in growing stronger, I may say that you will be discharged from the service, and sent to England as soon as ever you are able to bear the journey." Saying which, and smiling as she spoke, Lady Maud left him, his mind mystified, and almost overpowered with joy.

The next day she did not allude to the subject, and, to all his inquiries, returned evasive answers.

"Never mind, Duncan," she said, "just get well, get strong, and then you shall know all. Don't you think I look happier than I did when you first saw me at your bedside?"

"I don't know," answered Duncan musingly, "though, may be, you do smile more lightsome like; but I know you have made *me* happier than I ever thought to be again."

"Well, Duncan," said the lady, "I have had another patient beside you, and he is also getting better, so you see my nursing experience has been very successful, and

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I may well look happy when the other convalescent is my own dear husband."

"Indeed you may, God be praised," replied Duncan, in an earnest, thoughtful manner, "and long may you both be spared in health and happiness."

"I hope your words may be prophetic, so good-bye, Duncan, for to-day," and as she disappeared it seemed to him as if the sun had departed also, and the old saint with it. Duncan was soon able to go out and walk in the yard attached to the convent, and sit under the old linden-tree that grew half out of the wall, affording, with its wide-spreading branches, a cool and delightful shade.

Six weeks had now elapsed since the battle of Waterloo, and for two days his lady friend had not visited him. The third day, while seated on the edge of his cot, watching the little window gradually brighten, and pondering over the strange events of the past, he did not hear the light step that approached him, and remained unconscious of any one's presence, until a hand was laid on his shoulder, and another placed before him two pieces of parchment.

"Duncan!" said the English lady, for she it was, "I have brought you your discharge. See, the surgeon states that, as you will never be able to sustain the fatigue of a long march, you are considered unfit for the service; but never mind, my friend, you will be quite able to march over the farm with your bonny Jean, whom I long to see; and this other paper is an order for a pension, which my father's interest has obtained for you. Now, don't thank me, Duncan; don't begin to thank me till I tell you all. Do you remember the short prayer I taught you?"

"Indeed I do," said the bewildered Duncan, with glistening eyes.

"And do you remember something I once said to you half in joke, but which has become a blessed reality, about needing your help one day?"

Duncan assented with a smile, as though the idea was something not to be entertained for a moment.

"There," said the lady, "those words have come true. Oh yes, your help has been needed and afforded in a way that no one could have imagined. If ever I did anything to make you more comfortable, happier, or in any way helped you, you owe me nothing. No thanks, no gratitude. You have repaid me more than a thousand-fold, for your hand—yes, *this hand*, my brave and noble Highland friend," she grasped his broad and hardened palm and gratefully pressed it, "saved my dear husband's life on the field of battle."

A long silence ensued; the hearts of both were too full to speak; but then Duncan poured forth his thanks in a torrent of words flowing direct from an honest, grateful heart, and which the lady had no power to stay.

"Nay, nay! Stop, stop! I must, I will leave you, Duncan, if you say so much. But now, listen and remember. Give my best love to Jean and little Jeanie and your dear parents, and rest assured that you will hear from me again."

She was gone, leaving Duncan standing there like a statue, holding in his hand the two papers which made him a free and independent man, until at length, unable to restrain himself, he fell upon his knees and poured forth an earnest prayer of thanksgiving to God for all His blessings.

A week later and Duncan stood on English soil, and there we leave him to pursue his journey northward with a glad heart to the home awaiting him, while we precede him to Eldmuir, and see what his friends there have been doing in the interval.

## CHAPTER XVI.

“Some murmur, when the sky is clear  
And wholly bright to view ;  
If one small speck of dark appear  
In their great heaven of blue.”

TRENCH.

THE news of Waterloo in due time had reached Eldmuir. As usual the intelligence had been received by old Alister, but there was something in the account of the great conflict which the good man would willingly have suppressed, and which he tried unsuccessfully to hide from Jean. Having however, got possession of the paper, she read of the severe loss sustained by Picton's Highland Brigade, which, in that fatal charge, almost at the commencement of the battle, had been reduced to a little over 600 bayonets. Jean's alarm when she first learned this was further increased as day succeeded day, until weeks had elapsed, and no letter arrived from Duncan. The poor wife's courage which had borne her up through so many trials failed at last; her step became slow and feeble, and she walked about like one in a dream. Even Mrs. Barbara's well-meant efforts at consolation were unheeded, and she seemed overwhelmed with sorrow.

“No! no!” she would say. “Don't tell me, for I canna believe there is any hope. He would have written long ago if he had been alive, as he always used to do.

Have we not heard many a time from him before the news of a fight came by the papers, and do you think he would not have let us know this time that he was safe, when such a terrible battle has been fought? No! no! my Duncan has fallen, and I'm a lone widow, and they bit bairns are just fatherless; waes me! waes me!"

A paroxysm of weeping generally succeeded such speeches as these, and as at these times she was not amenable either to reason or comfort, Mistress Barbara was obliged to leave her until her bursts of grief had subsided. There were times when a ray of hope appeared to break through the clouds of her sorrow, but these were of short duration, and would always terminate as she thought the matter over in a heart-broken cry of "Waes me! waes me! he'll never come back—never—never—more."

One day the pastor's sister fancied from her subdued manner there was an opportunity of prevailing upon her to look at things in a more cheerful light. "The prospect is dark before you, Jeanie woman," she said quietly, "but you know that the darkest hour is often just before the dawning—we must still wait, and pray on in faith and hope."

"Don't tell me," cried Jean excitedly, "I know it's dark—dark as a yuletide night, and likely to be; there's nae sun to rise o'er my misery, waes me! waes me!"

"Oh Jean, I do wish you would not be so desponding; there's always hope where there is uncertainty, and though I can feel for your dismal apprehensions, something keeps telling me that all will yet be well."

"May be!" said Jean wearily. "The Lord in His mercy grant it, but how can I help being sorrowful? You do not know how much I loved Duncan, and what a loss it will be."



"I, too, have lost my husband, Jean, and God knows how much I loved him."

The distressed woman looked rebuked, and answered, "Forgive me, Mrs. Barbara, that I did not remember. Oh! if I had but the peace you have found—but it will not come yet—not yet. Just let me be, for my sorrow is so fresh and sore."

"At evening time it shall be light," said the pastor's sister.

"Ay, at eventide," sobbed Jean. "In the evening of life when my grey hairs are laid on the pillow for the last time—not before—not before."

She seated herself on a low stool by the fire, and throwing her apron over her head preserved a sullen silence, and in this mood Mistress Barbara had for the present to leave her.

When this good woman returned to the manse, she found her brother reading a letter which bore the appearance of having come from abroad.

"What's that?" she cried; "is it news of Duncan? Where has it come from?"

David looked quietly over his spectacles, and replied, "Read it for yourself," then reverently added, "For this and all His mercies, the Lord's name be praised."

Mrs. Barbara just glanced over the contents of the letter, and then throwing a plaid over her head ran as no one ever remembered seeing the minister's sister run before, till she reached the cottage of Jean. The sorrow-stricken woman was still seated, weeping bitterly and moaning to herself as she had left her.

"Jean! Jean! look up woman, and be thankful. Here's news from Duncan!"

With a start, and her face pale as ashes, Jean sprang

towards her visitor, her hand outstretched to receive the letter.

"Sit down, lass, and hear me read it," said Mrs. Barbara authoritatively; "it's from a grand English lady, and not for you, but just for Davie, so hear now what she says."

Jean was speechless! the reaction had completely overpowered her; and, wiping her eyes with the corner of her apron, she prepared to listen while Mrs. Barbara read, explaining occasionally what she thought might be unintelligible to Jean, as follows:—

"Lion d'Or,

"Brussels,

"July 19th, 1815.

"Reverend Sir,"—

("It's to my brother, you know, Jean," said Barbara.)

"When you read this you will, I trust, allow that I do right in addressing you, of whom I have heard much from one I may with truth call a very dear and beloved friend—"

"Did you say a leddy had wrote that?" interrupted Jean sharply.

"I did," replied Barbara unsuspectingly, turning over the sheet. "She subscribes herself 'Maude Amelia H.'"

"And what," cried Jean with raised voice, "and what right has any bonny leddy, English or Scotch, with her 'miliars,' or whatever they call her, to be writing like that of my husband?"

Mistress Barbara, for the moment surprised at this sudden outbreak, instantly, with the quickness of a true woman, saw what was passing in Jean's mind, and, while unable to restrain a smile, said as severely as her nature would admit, "Hush with your foolish jealousy, you con-

trary woman, sitting there as sour as a groseret when folks are trying their best to comfort you. Bide still and let me read the letter if you want to hear about Duncan ; but if you don't, why say so, and I'll take it back to Davie."

" Well, well, go on and don't mind me," said Jean ;  
" I'll not interrupt again."

So Mistress Barbara continued :—

" Your friend, Duncan Campbell, though severely wounded at Waterloo, is, I am happy to say, in a fair way of recovery. If you are surprised at a perfect stranger taking such interest in him, I may explain that I was accompanying my husband, a captain of dragoons, to Belgium, and that a detachment of Highlanders were in the same vessel with us. During the passage I first met with Duncan, learned all about his family affairs, and was led to admire his upright, religious character.

" Since that the brave man nobly exposed his own life and succeeded in saving that of my husband on the battlefield. My husband was afterwards seriously wounded, and I have been so much occupied in attending on him, that I was unable sooner to make any inquiries after his preserver. I have, however, at last found him convalescent in the hospital, and shall attend on him every day as long as he remains.

" Please assure his wife that he is well looked after and cared for, and that the surgeon considers him quite out of danger. My husband, now colonel, is able to testify to Duncan's noble behaviour, and will have, I do not doubt, sufficient interest to procure his discharge from the service. Meanwhile, I have written to my father, Lord A——, who, I am certain, will have no difficulty in procuring a pension for your friend, notwithstanding his short term of service.

" Duncan has suffered from a severe attack of fever,

and during the delirium which ensued raved almost continually about a 'Steenie,' which is a name I never heard him mention before, but probably you and his friends will understand it. I should like to hear from you if you could send me good news of the poor man's family, which will cheer him on his bed of sickness.

"I must now conclude with kindest regards to all in Duncan's name. His friends here will do all in their power for him, and then not think that they have begun to repay him for what he has done for them.

"I am, sir,

"Yours very sincerely,

"Address—

"Maude Emilia H——.

"Lady M. E. H.,

"Lion d'Or,

"Brussels, Belgium."

"There now," said Mrs. Barbara, "are you satisfied at last, woman?—or have you any more whimsical ideas in your head to make folks miserable?"

"No!" said Jean; "thank God for this. A great weight's taken off my mind; but, oh! I trust the fever will not take a sudden turn; they do sometimes, you know, and my husband may die after all."

"I just thought so," cried Mrs. Barbara indignantly, rushing out of the cottage. "The foolish body would not believe if Duncan came himself and told her. I have no patience with such folks."

"What's the matter, Mrs. Barbara," said Alister, who met her as she came out of the door; "can I do anything for you?"

"You can just get out of my way," said the excited little woman, "and, if it's pleasing to you, go away to Jean, and just shout into her ears that Duncan's well, and

coming home. May be she'll listen to *you* if you keep on long enough."

"Gude sake," cried Alister, turning to watch her rapidly-retreating figure as she turned back to the manse, "that's the best news I've heard this twelvemonths! and now that yon hallion Boneyparte is going to be transported for life, we'll, may be, get a bit peace and quietness. But eh, sirs, where's yon skelping paidle away to? I must stop that."

He had caught sight of his grandson Donald, who was making his way cautiously behind the cottages, diligently keeping out of sight, as if engaged in some mischief, or bent upon playing truant that morning. Old Alister dodged quietly round a cow-house near to which he was standing, and succeeded in arresting the lad on the edge of the burn which he was preparing to cross.

"Where are you going, you limb?" he said angrily, twisting his hand beneath the collar of the boy's jacket and severely shaking the culprit, who looked up at him with that half-piteous, half-defiant expression so common to youth when suddenly detected in wrong-doing, and replied,—

"Ou, a' was just ganging ower to help auld Fergus."

"And is that the way to Ferguses, you deil's imp?" exclaimed his wrathful grandfather, "and have you finished that arithmetic lesson I set you before I came out?"

"Div' ye no' mind," said the boy, "what ye telled me when a' could na get the sum richt? that ye wad leuk ower the multipulcashun yoursell when you could find the leaf that was riven out o' yer key-beuk, and that I might set it bye the whiles!"

"Ahem!" coughed Alister, "and couldn't you have taken the next one till I had time, you lazy loon?"

"And did na ye tell ma that I was na to skip ony thing," exclaimed Donald, feeling his ground, "but just gang straight on and finish ane afore I began anither?"

"Ahem!" said Alister, "and may be you will have forgotten the Roman history lesson among other things, you neer-do-weel."

"No, a' didna forgot it," said the boy, "but a' couldna see you ta speer aboot Julius Cæsar's mither, sac a' thawt as Duncan was coming hame, Fergus would want things pitten ta reets, an' I wad gang ower and help him."

"And who told you that Duncan was coming home?" inquired Alister, giving the lad a tremendous shake.

"Didna a' hear Miss—Mistress Ba—Barbara reading the bonny leddy's letter to Jean the morn, an' sac—"

"What was it the letter said, laddie?" cried Alister, whose curiosity was now aroused.

"Hoo can a' tell you," cried Donald, "an' you hauding sec a grip o' my thrapple that a'se maist chowkit? Let gang, and mebbie I'll tell ye."

Alister released his hold of his grandson, who, however, no sooner found himself at liberty than, with a series of extraordinary leaps, he put the burn between them, and stood laughing on the other side.

"The lad louns like a redshank," muttered Alister to himself, "and old Scotia's motto will just fit him, 'Nemo me impune lacessit,' which in this case may be interpreted, 'I cannot catch the lad without wetting myself.' Now, mind you," he cried to Donald, and raising his voice, "there's a score to settle betwixt us that will be paid in full this night, or my name's not what it is."

But Donald was not willing to depart on these terms.

"See you, luckie Daddie," he cried, "I'll be gude a' day, and gang an' help Fergus like ony man, and a' ken whar a big partan is under a muckle stane on the beach,

and a'll bring it ye for your supper if ye'll no dunt me."

"I'll not bind myself with any promises, lad; but do as you say, and may be we'll let you off. Now, away you go and help Fergus, and mind you don't speak a word to any one about the letter."

"Nae fear o' me," cried the boy, and putting one hand in a pocket, and the other through a hole in his trews where the pocket should have been, he went whistling over the heather.

Thanks to this indefatigable young story-teller, however, the contents of the mysterious letter became known all over the village, and Mistress Barbara was shocked out of all propriety, and made as angry as such a kind-hearted body could be by an old gossip, who told her, with a long face and great solemnity, that she had heard for certain "Duncan had run away with an English lord's wife, and was going to ride in a carriage, and never come back any more to Eldmuir."

## CHAPTER XVII.

“To his paternal home he is returned  
With a determined purpose to resume  
The life he had lived there.”

WORDSWORTH.

IN a day or two the true version of the letter was current in the village, and when people learned this, they at once began to extol Duncan, and to speak of his good fortune, as though it were the means and not the result of that bravery he had so conspicuously displayed, and which had in such a marked manner procured for him the respect and friendship of those in power.

On old Janet the good news operated like magic. She rose from her bed, and again occupied her accustomed chair by the fireside, talking all day about Duncan, and appearing to have quite forgotten or to avoid naming Steenie. The anticipated joy of beholding one who, if less loved, had grown more dear in his absence, drove all else from her mind, and every time the door opened her heart thrilled in expectation of Duncan's entrance. As nothing was yet known concerning the fate of Steenie, they thought it prudent to let the subject rest, and not dispel the old body's dream of happiness by reviving her sad recollections of that great sorrow. David had replied to the letter, but owing to the tardy and often interrupted postal service of those days his answer did not reach



Brussels until after Duncan's departure for England.

Old Fergus, anxious that his little farm should present an attractive appearance when his son returned, worked early and late to produce such a result. He received willing help from his friends in the village whenever they could spare time, and young Donald, to his great delight, procured from his reluctant grandfather entire suspension from his lessons, in order that he might also assist. Little Jeanie had many surprises in store for her father in the way of lessons acquired, and needlework completed; she also took great delight in telling her young sister all about the parent she could of course not remember, and so the "wee prattler" came to look for his return with great interest and, perhaps, something of awe. Jean, though still troubled with occasional fits of despondency and anxious forebodings, began to be more cheerful, and was active in preparations for the welcome reception of her husband.

As no more letters reached Eldmuir from abroad, the family was kept in a state of suspense and uncertainty, for Duncan, they felt, might any day arrive. July passed by without the occurrence of any important event. Fergus got in his small stock of hay, and watched with increasing pride the ripening of his oats, which was the only cereal his laud produced. So August crept on, with its genial sunshine and almost imperceptibly shortening days, and summer, which is everywhere beautiful—a season of rejoicing and glorious profusion, telling of a beneficent Creator's love, typified in the love of the created—waned away into the fulness of autumn.

Beauty is abundant everywhere—not more in the richly-wooded countries where luxuriant leaf-life proclaims the overflowing bounty of nature, than in the

quiet Highland glens where only the green braken, the flowery heather, and a few blossoms of the wilderness teach a similar lesson. There is beauty in the eager life of insects, revelling amid wild flowers that shed their mingled fragrance on the warm still air; there is beauty in the fulfilment of spring's promises, even though the pink blossoms have given place to the sober-hued fruit; beauty in the shadowy waves of the long grass, just ruffled by a passing breeze, and, though the sameness of the green foliage might weary the sight, golden sunlight, glancing on a thousand fluttering leaves, presents a welcome and harmonious change. Foretastes of the eternal summer of heaven are these glad but fleeting seasons on earth, and they alone can estimate the blessing who dwell in a climate ever bleak and cold, excepting during the short period of glorious warmth, when the earth is filled with gladness, and the corn quickly ripens and ensures to them comfort and plenty through the long and chilling months of winter.

Donald and Jeanie frequently rambled about with little Jessie, and on their return partook of supper with a cheerful party of friends, including the pastor, his sister, and old Alister, who met nightly around Jean's clean and cosy hearth to discuss the all-important subject of the soldier's expected return. Little Jeanie was a kind-hearted girl, and, disliking to see suffering in any form, often remonstrated with Donald on his cruel pastime of setting traps for rabbits; but the boy was incorrigible, and continued to set his traps "in spite of her," or even of all Mrs. Barbara could say or do.

One evening, near the close of August, the sisters Jeanie and Jessie were seated by the manse gates watching the ducks preparing to leave the pond and waddle up to the hutch behind the house, the elder amusing the

younger by giving imaginary names to the ducks, and keeping her in a state of delightful excitement, while waiting for Donald to accompany them on a short excursion after bramble-berries. When the boy came his rosy face was glowing with pleasure, and he, almost exhausted with the haste he had made, was so brimful of news, that he had to pause to recover breath before he could relate what he had seen.

"Come along, Jeanie," he said, "come quick, for whatever d'ye think has got into the rabbit trap I set up by the fell dyke?"


"I dinna ken," replied Jeanie, "but oh, Donald, whatever it is let the puir thing gang, will you no?"

"And what if it was a bonny young muir poot?" cried Donald exultingly.

"A muir poot, are ye sure?" said Jeanie, quite interested.

"Sure it is," said the boy, "sae noo you'll git your wuss—come on—gie's yer hand, Jess—come on afore it's dark." And the eager lad began dragging his friends away towards the mountain. Jeanie had often wished for a young moor fowl for a pet, and fancied it would be so pleasant to feel its soft feet all covered with white hairy down resting on her hand. She had never, in her estimation, seen anything so beautiful as these "queer creatures," so human-like in expression, with such pretty variegated backs, crimson-edged eyes, and lovely white breasts.

For a moment, but only a moment, Jeanie shared in Donald's feelings of exultation. Directly afterwards she remembered having read in her picture-book on natural history how birds appeared to share with human parents in the intensity of love for their offspring. She remembered that the little moor fowl would have a



mother, who was perhaps even now seeking it, and that it might have brothers and sisters who would sadly miss it if it were lost to them. She thought of her own mother, and then looking down into the sweet face of Jessie, resting peacefully and happily in the consciousness of security afforded by her elder sister's presence, her heart sorrowed for the little bird, and she determined to release it. It struck her also that the poor thing might not like the food she could give it so well as the juniper berries gathered on the braeside by its own mother, so, although the temptation to keep it was strong within her, she resisted it courageously, and earnestly besought Donald to let it go. Vexed for a little while, the boy at first stubbornly refused her request, but at length the good teaching of the pastor's sister prevailed with Jeanie, who resolved to make a sacrifice, and thus save the young moor poot from further pain.

"See, Donald," she said, "if you'll but let it awa I'll gie you that bonny beuk Mrs. Barbara fetched fra Inverara my last birthday, the *Pilgrim's Progress*, you ken."

This was a treasure dear to both of them, and to become the happy possessor of it, was too much for Donald to refuse. He acquiesced in her wish, so the trio proceeded together rapidly up the mountain to set the captive free.

It was, indeed, a young grouse that had fallen into the toils that Donald had set, but as his traps were calculated only to confine and not to kill, the little creature was unhurt, and upon regaining its liberty flew joyously away over the tops of the heather. It had just gone when they heard it utter a glad cheep! cheep! which was immediately answered by another cheep! cheep! at a little distance.

“Hear ye that, Donald?” said Jeanie. “It’s the mither giving it a walcome hame. Oh! how lanesame and sad she would ha’e been this night if we had keepit it, and, may be, the puir thing is a Wally-draigle, and stops with the mither when a’ the ither ones are awa’. Eh, Donald, but I am glad we let it off!”

Donald was touched either by the tones of his little friend’s voice, or the joy expressed in the meeting of the birds, or, perhaps, by both. At any rate a tear rolled down his cheek, and he whispered, “I dinna want the *Pilgrim’s Progress*, Jeanie, and I’ll promise you niver to set anither trap.”

Jeanie’s countenance beamed with gladness as she experienced something of that happy feeling consequent on performing a good action, and they were turning homeward when suddenly a tall figure appeared on the hill above the manse, between them and the golden light of the setting sun.

“A sojer!” said Donald, as they approached the stranger, and noticed that his dress consisted of a red jacket and a pair of tartan trews.

The man turned as he heard the sound of voices near him, and thus exposed a face which was well remembered by one of the party.

“It’s feyther!” cried Jeanie, letting go both the others’ hands, and, bounding over the ground, she was received with a hearty embrace into the wanderer’s arms.

What a meeting that was!—earnestly looked forward to, and pictured in every possible way by him who had been so long absent. What succession of questions were asked and answered, and how each reply brought peace and joy to Duncan’s heart, as he learned that all his loved ones were well, needs no words from me.

Little Jessie looked up at first a little shyly into the

handsome, bronzed face of her father, but soon overcame this feeling, and nestled, as by right, in his loving arms.

"Old Brock," whose usual pace was a sleepy kind of trot, recognizing his old master from afar, bounded through the brackens and down the rocks to bid him a boisterous welcome.

"I must run on and tell mither," said Jeanie, as the party prepared to descend to the village, Jessie seated on her father's shoulder, and Donald holding him by the hand, as though afraid the lost one again would run away. Running quickly on and bounding into the cottage, Jeanie elicited a somewhat stern rebuke from her mother, who, seated by the clock, was taking out Duncan's old letters one by one from that time-honoured receptacle, and reading them tearfully; for Jean that day was in one of her desponding moods. Jeanie throwing her arms round her mother's neck, unwittingly scattered about the hearth the letters accumulated in her lap; and just then the sheep dog, coming in with headlong haste ran against the clock case, shutting the door with a bang, and the cat, thus unceremoniously disturbed in its nap on the creepie, attacked Brock, while in midst of the confusion the child breathlessly exclaimed, "He's come! mither! he's come!"

Jean, trembling, turned pale and supported herself against the table, and the sunlight which all the while had been streaming in through the door, was suddenly interrupted as some one stooped on entering to set down a child—and then. But such meetings as those of Duncan and Jean are too sacred for words to express; the two loving hearts were again, once and for ever, united.

## CHAPTER XVIII.

“There is no flock, however watched and tended,  
But one dead lamb is there ;  
There is no fireside, howsoe’er defended,  
But has one vacant chair.”

LONGFELLOW.

AND now again were assembled the friendly circle that had often met at eventide around Jean’s cheerful hearth. But a missing link was restored, and the chair long vacant was again occupied by one who had been ever present in their thoughts. Yes ! all were at last together, and the happiness that pervades the homes of those who find pleasure in the simplicity of a rural life animated every face. It was a happiness that might be dull and intolerable to those who can only live, or imagine they can only live, in a vortex of excitement and dissipation ; but, to those whose joy is pure love, it was perfect bliss, nay, heaven itself.

A degree of pleasure may be found in the beauty of a tastefully-designed garden, where, amid smooth-shaven lawns, a succession of star-shaped, leaf-formed, and many-fashioned beds display brilliant arrangements of colour, and where the flowers are made to bloom in accordance with the geometrical ideas of the gardener. But this may not compare with the pleasure to be found in contemplating the beautiful and wondrous works of the Creator in all their native simplicity. The

shady lanes, the woodland glens, the tinted foliage, the richly-coloured mosses, and the wild, luxuriant growth of vegetation, present scenes of loveliness that can never be equalled by the hand of man.

So there may be happiness and beauty of some kind in the life that has marked out for itself a regular succession of duties, and which moves round and round in its monotonous routine, allowing no chance wish or natural impulse, even for good, to mar the fancied symmetry of its ritualistic character.

But true happiness, and the real beauty of life, is only derived from the full and rational enjoyment of God's blessings, and a loving obedience to His unerring laws. This may be found as often in the cottage of the labourer as in the mansion of the wealthy. It produces that tranquil state of mind in which self is abnegated—its possessors live in the exercise of duties that to them are pleasures—of charities to which they attach no merit, and for which they expect no reward—whose greatest earthly ambition is to see their offspring cared for and prosperous, and whose brightest hopes are centred in a happy reunion hereafter.

Such were the lives, and so constituted were the minds of those now assembled to welcome home the war-worn soldier. Duncan, who in the meantime had had a joyous and deeply affecting meeting with his mother, was seated in the old arm-chair, with Jessie on his knee. Jean occupied a low stool beside him, her head resting against his arm, which she clasped with both her hands. Over her sunbrowned face alternate emotions of hope and despair had long flitted like summer clouds obscuring and then revealing the calm heavenly blue beyond; but all was past away, and peace now rested there. Now and again she cast inquiring looks at the face of him she loved, fearing perhaps that she might yet



find something there suggestive of anxiety for what was yet to come ; but there was nothing to disquiet her. The rest of a weary spirit in the sunlight of home was there pictured. The inward consciousness of welcome was there ! Hope, joy, peace, and love—all were enshrined in those satisfied glances that beamed out from the very heart of the wanderer as they rested on old familiar things. The pastor, his sister, Elspeth, Fergus, and Alister, those who formed the inmost circle of dear friends, were seated around, and a more joyous, happy, and thankful party it would be difficult to conceive. Donald and Jeanie, upon one stool, divided their attention between a glorious picture-book reserved by Mistress Barbara for such an occasion as this, and the stories that Duncan was telling of his adventures abroad. He had much that was exciting to relate, many wonderful stories to tell, and much that was terrible and sad to recount, that interested the group ; but most of all they loved to hear him speak of the lady who had proved so kind a friend to him in his sufferings, and so bountiful a benefactor on his recovery. Interesting also to them were his descriptions of the old convent at Brussels, with its painted windows and gloomy corridors, and those quaint old bodies, the nurses, who moved about so silently, and performed their duties with so much care and attention, and of whom the poor wounded soldiers retained such grateful recollections.

Concerning the rescue on the battle-field Duncan said little. It was not in his nature to magnify his own deeds ; but the death of Jamie he dwelt on at length, and then he told them of Steenie. Many tears were shed by all as Duncan described his meeting with that much-lamented brother, and when he had done a deep silence fell on the household.

"He has gone away from us," at length said the minister; "but oh, my friends, let us thank God for that blessed hope which assures us we may meet again. The life of the soul is but beginning in this world. Death may break the thread, but he will only change the scene, not the story. The pattern woven here may seem only a maze of confusion, but hereafter we shall see that a beginning of little things, all tangled together, was planned out by Omnipotent wisdom to become a goodly testimony of His care and love, and tender forethought. 'God is love,' my friends; let us not repine if we fancy that His anger is kindled, and that He sometimes takes our dearest and best-beloved away from us. If we have friends in heaven, it must be that our hearts will follow them there; and so, amid all our poor, blind, stumbling over what we cannot understand, our weary feet may, through His grace, tend thitherward at last themselves. Peace rest with the poor laddie's memory; he has found a soldier's grave in a stranger's land, and that has been the heritage of many and many a brave Highlandman before him."

He paused for a few moments, then added, dashing away a tear, "Poor Steenie! Nevertheless it is the Lord's will, and we must not repine."

Another short interval of silence followed after the old man had spoken, but though a shadow had fallen over them in the death of Steenie, it was past, and time, which tempers all sorrows, be they never so severe, had so softened theirs, that all in the little cottage were quietly happy that evening. After a time the conversation flowed into pleasanter channels, and when they separated for the night it appeared as though they had resumed the old life that had been for a while interrupted, but was now happily restored to them.

It is good to think of such scenes. Sometimes our lives seem aimlessly to be leading us on as though we had nothing but sorrow and disappointment to look forward to; while at other times we feel to be drifting from bad to worse, till we are nearly tempted to say, "To what end is all this? Is not death better than life?" The tempest of furious passion rocks us to and fro as the lofty trees of the forest are shaken by the wind; our tender leaves are torn from us, and scattered we know not whither; the thunder rolls above, and we can almost realize the thoughts of the Psalmist when he says, "Their souls are melted because of trouble." Then gradually the violence is passed and the storm dies away in the distance; the sun shines out, and a little bird emerging from beneath some sheltering spray, pours forth its jubilant song of praise and love. Now we are happy!—short lived and transient may be the interval, but still it is real and we are happy! God has not entirely deserted us, life is not all gloom; "Weeping may endure for a night, but joy cometh in the morning," and when we see others happy, though we may not ourselves at that moment be partakers of their joy, yet we know that the gifts of our heavenly father are common to all; "He maketh His sun to shine upon the evil and the good, He sendeth rain upon the just and on the unjust," and if, as the poet tells us, we "learn to labour and to wait," the season of our own rejoicing will surely not be long delayed.

## CHAPTER XIX.

“There is a reaper whose name is Death,  
And with his sickle keen  
He reaps the bearded grain at a breath,  
And the flowers that grow between.”

LONGFELLOW.

OLD FERGUS experienced a quiet content when Duncan announced his intention of undertaking the labour of the farm and allowing his father to rest. Not that the old man would ever cease to work, but there was a sensation of security in the thought that the burden and heat of the day would henceforth rest upon younger shoulders, and he in his declining years might feel that his family was provided for. To Duncan, home had never seemed so dear as now, and perhaps it was well he had been away, and thus been able to dissipate the restless spirit that once threatened to wreck his career.

In the story of real life one must not expect to find all happiness and sunshine, nor would it be well for us that such should be the case. We might easily grow too much enamoured of a world wherein we experienced nothing but pleasure! As we are only passing through this mortal stage on our way to a higher, holier, and happier state, an ever-wise and loving Providence has ordained that while we possess joys that cheer and comfort us on the journey, they are never lasting, but are followed

by seasons of gloom and disappointment, leading us to contemplate hopefully the thought of a better country hereafter, where there remaineth a rest for the people of God.

Old Janet rejoiced exceedingly at the return of her son, and his frequent visits caused her pale and furrowed face to brighten up with exquisite pleasure. She was growing more childlike every day, and this change foreshadowed another that should be still greater and more sad for all. When the chill north winds swept down the valley, and the sharp frosty nights succeeded raw damp days, it became evident to all that her end was near. There was more of resignation than of sorrow in the thought, because it was not unexpected; and at her advanced age dissolution could not be long delayed. Still, although we know "our loss is their gain," tears will flow when endearing and loving ties are sundered.

For some time after Duncan's return, he and his friends had forbore to tell the aged mother of Steenie's death. At last, however, the minister told her how the lad had died, and of the last loving message he had sent to her, and she received the intelligence with a calmness that surprised them all. Not a word did she speak until the pastor had finished, and then, leaning back in her chair, she clasped her hands together, and murmured almost inaudibly, "The Lord be praised, I shall see my ain dear laddie again." She spoke no more of him till she lay upon her death-bed, but from that day she rapidly failed and became thoroughly resigned. The minister paid her daily visits, reading to her passages from the Scriptures, many of which, being possessed of an excellent memory, and well acquainted with the sacred volume, she herself from time to time selected. The company of her little *grandchildren* was a source of great comfort and enjoy-

ment to her, but their ways were different. Jessie was a shy little girl and seemed timid in her attentions to her grandmother, but Jeanie had a peculiarly winning and gentle manner, and tended her so lovingly, that she prophesied the child would "surely grow up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord."

The soft, mild days of later autumn passed without change, but when, after the bracken had turned brown, the grass assumed its yellow hue, the leaves were swept away from the branches, and the cold and death-like repose of winter stole over the landscape, the bright angel-messenger came for old Janet, and found her prepared for the great change that awaited her.

A day of storm and rain had been succeeded by one of brilliant sunshine, and towards its close a little band of mourners were assembled in the chamber of death. The windows looked towards the ocean, and admitted the golden radiance of the setting sun, whose beams, stretching downward from the purple clouds that partially hid but could not conceal his glory, brought vividly to mind the ladder that Jacob saw in his dream, reaching from earth to heaven. Gathered round the couch of the dying woman, gazing sadly and solemnly upon the wreck that time and trouble had laid so helplessly there, were all the friends she held dear, each anxious to catch the last sound she might utter, and to note the last glance she might give on earth. Fergus knelt by the bedside, and Jean with her arm around his neck knelt beside him. Duncan leant over his mother, who grasped his hand as though she might thus hold on a little longer to life. Elspeth, the minister, and Barbara were there, but these were all, for it was thought best that, unless their grandmother should ask for them, the children should be excluded. When she spoke, the tones of the

old woman's voice were tremulous and plaintive, but, although all around her were weeping, her own eyes were dry, and she appeared contented.

"Duncan!" at length she said, "are you there, Duncan?"

"I'm here beside you, mother," said her son in a faltering voice.

"I kenned you would come back, lad," said his mother. "I was sure ma auld een wad be blessed in the sight o' you ance mair, though they telled me you were gane sae far awa. Oh! Duncan lad, dinna gang awa ony mair. You'll stay wi your puir feyther, will you no, and gie the auld man a wheen rest? You'll stay wi your ain wife and bonnie bairns, will ye no, Duncan?"

"I will, mother," answered Duncan, sobbing, "God helping me."

"Ay, lad, God alane can help us ta dee what's right, and oh my puir Steenie!" She partly raised herself, and, looking inquiringly into their faces, exclaimed, "Did na some o' you tell me that Steenie was gane?"

"'Tis true, mother," said Duncan, "and his last message was to you. 'Tell mother,' he said, 'that I have learned to trust in the Lord,' and he was very sorry for leaving you as he did."

"Hear ye that, noo!" said old Janet. "Puir, puir Steenie! Read minister—read about Simon."

"She means Simeon," said the pastor, turning ove the leaves of the Bible, for he seemed intuitively t understand what the sufferer was thinking of, an having found the place, read slowly and with emu tion, 'Lord, now lettest Thou Thy servant depart peace, according to Thy word. For mine eyes ha seen Thy salvation.'"

"It's even sae!" exclaimed Janet. "I can say t

noo wi a quiet mind. Read mair, minister—read aboot David.”

The minister turned to that sad but beautiful story of David’s lament for the child of Bathsheba. Janet stopped him at the words, “I shall go to him, but he shall not return to me.”

“Ay, ay,” said the old woman. “He’ll no come back to me, but I shall go to him—better sae, better sae.” Her voice seemed almost to die away, and a deathlike stillness prevailed for some minutes, only broken at intervals by a sob which one or other of the mourners could not restrain. Again Janet spoke. “Surely the sun has set unco sune the day—it’s growing dark—sae dark—I dinna see you. Duncan, ma son, are you there yet?”

“I am still here, mother; don’t you feel my hand?”

“Is that your hand, Duncan? Oh, ay, I mind it noo, but I canna see you;” and it was even so, for poor Janet’s eyes were fast closing to the things of earth. Soon afterwards she murmured, “Puir Steenie, he wadna come to see his auld mither;” then, as if correcting herself, she added, “Oh, but I mind you telled me Steenie was gane before—puir laddie. But he was oor ain prince, ye ken; and, though they said he was a Papist, we could na help but love him, you ken. The Hieland chieftains would hae spent their last for the bonny prince, and ma Steenie could na hae fallen in a better cause.”

Her mind had evidently gone back to the days of her childhood, and she was thinking of the memorable ’45, the last despairing struggle of the unfortunate Stuarts.

When she ceased speaking, the pastor knelt down and prayed fervently, while those beside her could no longer



restrain their tears. When he had ended Janet again spoke.

“Oh, my ain dear ones and freens, I have been muckle trouble till you—the auld woman grew very wearysome and ill-tempered. Will ye forgie her noo—forgie her noo?”

“Mother,” said Duncan, “there’s nothing to forgive—nothing.”

“I see noo!” cried the old woman joyfully. “Oh but yon’s a bonnie sunrise—bonnie—bonnie! And wha’s yon in white—wi gouden hair—and glory? Oh, I ken! yes, I ken!”

The frail body sank back on the pillow inert, motionless, and for ever. The vital spark had fled!

A glimpse of heaven’s brightness had illumined the departing spirit, as it went forth from the sorrow, pain, and gloom of the land of tears into the mysterious glory of the hereafter, to meet there the ransomed spirit of her son, whom on earth she had mourned so long and so faithfully.

## CHAPTER XX.

“In small proportions we just beauties see,  
And in short measures life may perfect be.”

BEN JONSON.

FOR a long time after Janet's death, a solemn sadness lingered over the little household, and when, later on, it gradually died away, it was not because she was forgotten, but that time began to heal their wounds and soften their griefs. Her memory continued as green and fresh in the hearts that had loved her as the grass that grew over her grave in the lone kirkyard. Her friends spoke of her, not sorrowfully, or as though her loss was irreparable, but tenderly, and with deep and earnest respect. She had not been untimely cut off, in the bloom of youth, or in the full blush of womanhood; but had lived a long, a good, and a useful life. She had left all who were connected with her by the nearest and dearest ties, surrounded with bright prospects of health and happiness; her recollections had gone back through a long vista of happy scenes; and at the close of her pilgrimage, when her hair had grown grey and the burden of life became too heavy, when her feet got weary, and this world, with all its beauty and promise, had nothing more to offer, the glory of a better world opened before her, and she went quietly and thankfully home to receive the rest of the blessed.

The blossoms in their pale rosy bloom are beautiful to look upon; but we do not regret their falling, because thus only we may expect the ripening fruit.

Shortly after the funeral, Duncan and Jean, with their two girls and Elspeth, removed to the mill-house, whose dark passages and low-ceiled rooms had long rested silent and lonely, growing sad in the absence of youth and the many voices that had once echoed there. The gloom that had gathered in them, lurking in their shuttered darkness like an unwelcome guest, stole away and disappeared before the animated voices and cheerful laughter of the children, and all seemed happy. In the winter Alister's daughter, Mrs. Graham, paid them a visit. She had long given up all hope of her husband's return, her heart yearned to again embrace her boy, and she rejoiced to feel that in him she possessed consolation for much that was lost. His predilection for a sea-life was, however, a source of anxiety and discomfort to her.

"He'll may be grow out of it and take to some useful trade," she said to her father.

But the old man shook his head, and replied,—

"No! I'm afraid he won't. What's bred in the bone, you know. It's an old story, but a true one. The lad will be a sailor in spite of us; so, lassie, I doubt you must let him have his way."

The lad was not yet nine years old, and, though the children of poor parents are often obliged to commence the battle of life when very young, Mrs. Graham shrank from the thought of her son's embracing such a perilous calling as that of the sea. This lonely woman had managed to stock a little shop in Glasgow, and retailed the commonest groceries to poor families in her immediate neighbourhood. The slender profits accruing from this small trade, and a trifle earned by washing, sup-

ported her decently. Alister had a small deposit in the bank, the interest of which was paid quarterly at Inverary. He also made a few shillings by cobbling, occasionally assisted the farmers in the hay-field or during the harvest, kept school in the evenings, and altogether the Dominie, as he was now invariably called, enjoyed a comfortable income. Donald was, therefore, not burdensome to him, but rather an assistance, as the young lad could make himself useful in a variety of ways.

Mrs. Graham was unable to remain long at Eldmuir. A neighbour was attending to the shop during her absence but she was anxious to be at home, lest her little business might suffer, and, after a stay of ten days, returned to Glasgow.

About a month after this visit, she wrote to Alister that her husband's old employers had offered to send her boy to school for three years, and after that, if desirable, to place him as apprentice on board one of their own vessels. This kindly offer she had accepted with gratitude, and now requested that Donald might be sent by a certain day to Inverary, where the skipper of a small wheat schooner, an acquaintance of her own and her late husband's, would take charge of him. Jeanie was, of course, grieved at the probable loss of her playmate; but they were both now arrived at an age when it was not to be expected they should remain idle, and she, becoming very useful to her mother, spent most of her time indoors.

Donald, in his own estimation, was a person of no small importance during the interval which elapsed between the receipt of his mother's letter and his own departure: a little box, constructed by Alister out of a stranded wine-case, held his small stock of clothing, and was packed and repacked many times before the final day.

Nearly every one in the village made the lad a present at parting, for he had made friends of all. Jeanie's gift was a pincushion fashioned by her own hands. Fergus, Duncan, and Jean each contributed something, and Mistress Barbara gave him some good advice, together with a large cake, the former of which was doubtless as soon forgotten as the latter was lost to sight.

The appointed morning at length arrived, when, after a long series of "good-byes" and hearty good wishes, the lad set forth in charge of his grandfather, his pockets well stuffed with eatables, and in due time they arrived at Inverary. Here Donald was handed over to the care of Maister Randall, skipper of the "*Jenny-go-lightly*," who swore an unnecessary oath over a dram of whisky that the boy should certainly be delivered in sound condition at his mother's door in Glasgow.

In due time Jean presented her husband with a fine boy, greatly to his satisfaction, for he had long wished for such an addition to his family. Duncan desired that the child should bear his own name, but Jean decided that he should be called after his grandfather, and as women generally in such matters have their own way, Jean, in this instance, had hers, and the rosy-cheeked infant was christened "Fergus."

The daily life of the poor is often uneventful and uninteresting, and that of the little family over whose bygone days so many vicissitudes had passed, was now calmly sailing on the bright sea of prosperity and contentment. "Year in and year out" they continued to pursue their unobtrusive way. Ere long the rosy-faced boy relinquished his title of "baby" in favour of a girl who was named Elspeth (shortened into Elsie), and in course of time the title of "baby" again descended to a second boy called Allan.

Grandmother Elspeth sat and knitted by the fireside, and told stories to the children. Jeanie grew up a blessing and comfort to every one, but to her mother most of all. Jessie was wilful and mischievous, yet everybody loved her, and of the rest the time is not yet come to speak. As every winter saw old Fergus more and more infirm, the tender hands of Jeanie were more willingly extended to help him. If he was ailing, none could wait on him like Jeanie. If the rheumatism troubled his shoulders, who could stand so long and patiently over him as Jeanie, rubbing in the ointment, and trying with all her heart to alleviate his pain? Who would look up into his face and smile and kiss his furrowed cheek, and bid him "no greet, for it would be better the morn," but Jeanie? who but her helped to while away the long Sabbath afternoons, reading to him from the Bible and "Pilgrim's Progress"? And when after four years a cold caught in seeking a stray lamb on the fells brought on inflammation of the eyes, and ultimately blindness, who but the young girl would lead him out into the sunshine, and tell him, in her quiet, artless way, how all things looked—how blue the sky was—how beautiful the mountains! how blooming the heather! how busy the bees!—things apparently trivial and unimportant themselves, yet so interesting to the frail old man who could not now see them. The happiness afforded him by this gentle ministration found its way back again into the maiden's hopeful bosom, and often her charge would turn his sightless eyes towards where he knew her face was, and when he tried to tell her how much she was to him, he could only murmur, as from his heart of hearts, "God bless Jeanie!"

## CHAPTER XXI.

“ This is the place : stand still, my steed,  
Let me review the scene,  
And summon from the shadowy past  
The forms that once have been.”

LONGFELLOW.

HAPPY days glide fast, while those of mourning and sadness linger long. Ten years have slipped away quietly, but not uneventfully, and it is now 1830, and in the scene of our story the people, more than outward things, have changed during the interval. The “everlasting hills” remain monuments of a stability that belongeth not to man. The clouds, whose shadows ceaselessly pursue each other over the upland slopes, are not less fleeting than the lives which chase each other from the cradle onward, seldom realizing their mission until the race is over, and they have to cross that “bourne from whence no traveller returns.” The “fisher folk” have, one by one, migrated from Eldmuir and the homes of their forefathers, to what is more important, a nearer market for the produce of their toil ; while of the other once dwellers in this retired village some have become lost in cities, some are dead, and some again have found other homes in the new town, rapidly becoming a thriving place, in the vicinity of the laird’s “big house.”

At the time about which we are now writing, Duncan

and Jean occupy the mill, and have added considerably to the extent of their little farm by renting some of the adjoining abandoned lands. Their old cottage is now tenanted by Alistair, who, notwithstanding that many of his former occupations have left him, purposes there to end his days ; Mrs. Graham has come to "keep house" for him, and his grandson, the youth Donald, is at sea.

The minister's stipend being long ago discontinued, the kirk was subsequently unroofed, and its walls have almost fallen to the ground ; at first its ruins were in their newness saddening to contemplate, but time, with loving tenderness, has at last covered them with grey and yellow lichens, that soften and subdue, and render harmonious, the painful evidence of man's ever-changing purposes. The yew-trees and the venerable hawthorn, once planted by loving hands, to be living mementoes of their dear departed friends, still religiously guard their trust. Tombstones have been broken down, and their inscriptions, being useless and no longer needed, defaced ; but not so with the trees ; even the birds knew better than to discard them, for were not the pink and luscious yew berries a pleasant dessert for them in the autumn ? And did not the scarlet haws supply an abundant festival in the cold and stormy days of winter ? The manse garden still produces a few flowers, which seem to droop in sorrow for the careful hands that once tended them, and hang down their heads as if ashamed to appear among the wild foxgloves and thistles that grow up around them. The manse itself is gone, and even the very stones of which it was built have been conveyed to the laird's house, there to be used for the erecting of new stables and outbuildings.

The minister and his sister have removed to Inverary,



where a little money Mistress Barbara has inherited from one of her late husband's relatives serves to support them. The good old man, from sheer love of the place, and for the sake of being near his cherished ones that lay in the kirkyard, would willingly have stayed at Eldmuir even after the cessation of his stipend. But his parishioners began to drift away and be incorporated into other parishes, and after that came the unroofing of the kirk. Then, he himself was growing old and feeble; the manse was dilapidated and draughty; and he became, month by month, less able to withstand the severe winters on that exposed coast. So at last, sadly and reluctantly, he had to seek a new home elsewhere. Memories are always holy, whether written upon the heart or engraved upon the tombstones, and ties that years of joy and loving associations have formed, cannot be broken abruptly, and, perhaps, for ever, without much sorrow; thus it was with him, and he ever retained a fond memory of the place where his loved and lost had lived and died.

Duncan and his family have now a journey of six miles, "long Scotch miles," to go to hear the word preached on Sabbath days. He has prospered since his return from the wars. That break in the lives of husband and wife was destined to cement them more closely together than ever, and a happier or more affectionate pair could not be found in all Argyleshire. Jean, who has a perfect horror of hasty or thoughtless words, still somewhat blames herself as unintentionally being the cause of her husband's going away, and has become thoughtful and subdued. A large family is gathered in the old mill-house, but they are happy and contented. Seven years ago they laid old Fergus by the side of his wife, and when the walls were broken down and the little

enclosure left unprotected, Alister erected a rude fence around the graves to keep away the sheep and goats. Flowers were planted above their last resting-place, and now, every morning, children just entering upon the path which those beneath once long trod and have now left for ever, come to water those flowers and keep them fresh as their memories.


Duncan's hair is now grey and thin, but his strength and hardihood are not diminished. Jean's raven locks are streaked with silver threads, but the beauty which once enthralled his heart is still there, and as he sits by the fire and watches her so affectionately, he blesses her with a fervour that shows his true and lasting love. Jeanie has now passed her twenty-second birthday. She is not, strictly speaking, as handsome as her mother was, or even as she is, but then she is so good, so kind, so industrious and so patient, that these qualities impart a charm to her features and a grace to her ways. Jeanie's is not a common-place, but what would be called a good-looking face, and her person comely in the extreme, but beyond the pleasant, happy, and kindly expression of her countenance, there is that in her heart that renders her truly loveable.

Barbara and her brother have been gone from Eldmuir these three years, but the former often writes, and her letters are amongst Jeanie's most treasured possessions. Barbara is missed in many ways, and Jeanie, notwithstanding that she tries to be to Jessie what the pastor's sister was to her, does not succeed to her own satisfaction. She is somewhat overruled by that bright-eyed, merry sister of hers, who is as impulsive as the wind, and will aggravate her to tears one minute and kiss them away the next with many expressions of repentance and amendment. Alas! that her repentance should be as

short-lived as her amendment! Jessie is a thorough Scotch beauty, and she knows it. She found out long ago, from her own reflection in the well-trough, that she was good-looking, and is now more than ever convinced of the fact by the aid of her little mirror. To describe her would be to describe the sunshine as it appears fifty times a day on the flowers, grasses, heather, and autumn-painted forest. With a profusion of dark brown hair growing somewhat low on her forehead; strongly marked eyebrows, that overarch a pair of rich brown eyes, whose expression varies with their owner's emotions; and red lips slightly and saucily parted; there is a fascination in all she does or says, that gives her at once the air of a "heather belle" in her native simplicity, and of an accomplished natural coquette in her airs and glances. She is merry, light-hearted, somewhat thoughtless, just a trifle vain, and she has "turned seventeen."

Both Jeanie and Jessie have enjoyed the advantage of seeing a little of the world and of thus improving their education in a way we will shortly relate; and though they do occasionally drop into the broad Scottish diction spoken around them, their language generally is that of a more southern land.

Fergus, now a lad of fourteen, is, thanks to some very kind friends whom we have before spoken of, and will soon have again to introduce, at school in Glasgow. He is intended for the ministry, and there is, therefore, every possibility of a prophecy of old Elspeth's coming true, for in this capacity the lad may "likely make a noise in the world;" of the next child, Elsie, now thirteen, it is enough to say she is not so acute as Jeanie was at her age, or quite so mischievous as Jessie used to be. She is a quiet girl, and learns her lessons industriously, therefore we



may hope that dame Fortune will provide a nook for Elsie where she will not be unhappy. Allan, now only eight years old, is fonder of driving the cows and hallooing after the sheep on the fells, than learning anything from books, and his father finds him of such great service that he is destined to become a farmer. Since he left the cradle two others have occupied it; these, are Maude Emilie, so named after the lady who tended the sick soldier in the old convent at Brussels; and Steenie, the youngest of all, named after the warrior uncle who fell in battle.

## CHAPTER XXII.

“I have been young, and now am old, yet have I never seen the righteous forsaken.”—PSALM xxxvii. 25.

AT the time of which we are now writing old Elspeth still lives, and is indeed a wonderful woman for her age, now over eighty-five years, and for her activity and cheerfulness is far beyond many of younger years, for she still busies herself about the farm and its domestic matters. Her favourite evening occupation is that of chanting to the children some of the many old Scottish ballads “which come into her mind, she does na ken hoo,” or in repeating to them some prose legends that relate to the troubled times when the fiery cross was borne by fierce warriors from valley to valley, and gleamed afar with dismal portent from the mountain summits. She also tells them stories, with which she must have become acquainted while quite a child, of Prince Charlie, and of the Rebellion of '45 (the year of her birth), and of later events; and in addition she relates many a legend of fairy lore that, while delighting, causes them to draw their seats nearer to each other, with the fancy that they hear weird voices in the night-wind as it eddies down the valley.

Donald, now an “able seaman” in the North American trade, occasionally pays them a visit. He has grown to

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be a "strapping youth," and he and Jeanie are still like brother and sister ; but not so he and Jessie.

They say he is courting Jessie, but then, you know, the "they says" often relate as facts things that never are and never will be. Jessie loves to tease Donald, and if he does look upon her with a lover's eye—and she is certainly handsome enough to induce such a homage—his wooing cannot be considered satisfactory. Jeanie does not seek to disguise her wishes that Jessie would give some encouragement to their old playmate, and for this the mischievous girl secretly laughs at her, and so things go on until Donald is compelled to leave them. After this parting Jessie grows dull for a day or two, but soon recovers her wonted spirits.

And now, in the interests of the thread of our story, it will be necessary to go back a few years, and refer briefly to some old friends, and those advantages which the sisters had, on one occasion, enjoyed. About a year before the minister left Eldmuir a letter was received by him from Lady H., who made full inquiries after Duncan and his family. She also informed him that her husband, now General H., had for several years held a high appointment in Canada, and that having been relieved, and retired from office, they had come to reside in "Armford Castle, an old mansion on the banks of the Eden in Cumberland." She "was sorry," she said, "that during a lengthened residence abroad they had apparently neglected one they had so much cause to remember, but hoped that the old friendship might be renewed."

David replied that Duncan and Jean were well and prospering. Soon afterwards another letter informed him that a box had been forwarded to Jean ; but nothing was said as to its contents.

Pending its arrival the family, especially the younger

branches, were in a state of delightful anticipation, and the guesses hazarded as to what might be in it, were many and marvellous. It might contain something which, on further consideration, it was found utterly impossible that any box of average proportions could hold. It might be all cake—or jam—this idea caused the children to draw in their breath, overwhelmed with the thought—it might be one thing—it might be another—but after all no one guessed right.

At length it came. Alister was supposed to have known something about how it got there, and this idea took such possession of the children's minds, that if anything had been broken, or had their expectations not been realized, the blame would have been laid on his innocent head.

The box entirely filled a cart. It was very heavy, carefully screwed down, and directed all over. They felt quite crushed under the infliction, if it might be termed so, and young Fergus would have been literally crushed if he had succeeded in dragging it out of the cart on top of him, as he seemed bent upon doing.

Old Alister took out the screws. Youthful eyes watched him anxiously, and he could not have done the least thing wrong without being instantly detected. Once a screw-head came off, and the old man was severely scolded all round, and they were still apprehensive, even after he had assured them several times that it was "all right yet." Perhaps the happiest time of all was just before the lid was lifted off, but this at last accomplished, they were all thrown into raptures, although it was evident that something far different had been expected by the children. Jean was, however, more pleased, and thankful for what she found there than she could find words to express.

Dress stuffs of all kinds and colours were the first things brought to light. These were marked—for Jean, for Jeanie, for Jessie, for Elsie, and Maud (David had sent Lady H. a correct list of the family), and for old Elspeth there was discovered a warm brown cloak.

Then there were coat-pieces, and trowsers-pieces for the male portion of the household; linen, flannels, ribbons for the general stock; and a writing-case for Fergus. Then came three handsome books, one red, one blue, and one green, for the three elder girls; in short, there were many things for everybody, and on the box-bottom lay a “big ha’ Bible,” this opened, on being lifted, at a place where a folded paper was inserted, and this paper, which contained a bank-note for £20, was marked simply, “for schooling.” There was also a passage marked in the book where the paper had lain. It was the twenty-fifth verse of the thirty-seventh Psalm, which we have placed at the head of this chapter.

When everything was out of the box, or when they thought that they had taken out everything, a letter was discovered, which informed them that General and Lady H., purposing to make a tour in the Highlands during the following summer, would consider it a great favour, and it would be to them a sincere pleasure, if they might on that occasion visit Duncan and his family.

It occupied Duncan nearly a whole week to write an answer to this letter, thanking them for their kind presents. The minister, Mrs. Barbara, Jean, and Elspeth, each considered his or her interference necessary, so that between them Duncan spoiled a good deal of paper, but at last succeeded in producing a very creditable and satisfactory epistle, and old Alister walked all the way to Inverary, to post it with his own hand.



## CHAPTER XXIII.

“The stately homes of England,  
How beautiful they stand,  
Amidst their tall ancestral trees  
O'er all the pleasant land.”

MRS. HEMANS.

BENEATH Duncan's humble roof not only was found peace, contentment, and domestic happiness, but also an enlivening cheerfulness, which filled the hearts of the inmates with sunshine, and lent a grace and joyousness to all their actions. The contents of the box previous to its arrival had been a source of innocent and diverting speculation, and their hilarity was not afterwards diminished. Through the long evenings of winter, nimble willing fingers fashioned and made up the various articles of dress, while the expected visit of their thoughtful benefactors afforded ample topic for conversation. When spring returned they appeared at kirk in the holiday attire thus kindly provided, and were envied and admired by all.

It was near the end of summer when General and Lady H. arrived—in fact, their visit had been so long postponed that the family at the mill-house had almost given up hopes of their coming. Posting through the Scottish Highlands was neither a rapid nor particularly safe mode of travel in those days, and the visitors had

been persuaded to delay their journey until a long continuance of dry summer weather should have improved the state of the ill-constructed roads. From the Borders to Inverary their progress had been satisfactory, though slow ; but at this point the real difficulties of locomotion commenced. Interested innkeepers pronounced the road to Eldmuir impassable for a carriage, and, to confirm their statements, shepherds were called into counsel, who declared unanimously that the "carriage and a' wad gang whomelen doon the screes." The General, however, who in his Peninsular experience had surmounted greater obstacles, was not easily daunted, and decided upon making the attempt. So, with the postboys cursing the rich Englishman's whim, and the lanky horses stumbling into ruts, looking hopelessly past the edges of their blinkers for a better road, and evidently doing the whole thing under protest, the party at last reached Eldmuir, where the equipage was beheld with much bewildering astonishment by the village boys from the "Toon."

The General and Lady Maud soon made a favourable impression on the dwellers at Eldmuir. They were interested in everything, and with delicate discrimination noticed all that was praiseworthy. Jean's butter, bread, and milk, and the neatness of her dairy, received encomiums, not as if her visitors felt it incumbent upon them to say something, and to say that something pleasantly, but as though they honestly meant it. Lady H. was so affectionately kind with the children that even the unusually shy and reserved Allan soon became familiar, and was emboldened to play with her watch-chain and explore the intricacies of her pockets. She also became so interested in Jeanie that she expressed a desire to take her to England, and Jean was too bewildered by the

suddenness of the proposal to object. Lady H. expatiated on the advantages that would accrue to Jeanie by seeing a little of the world, and how much she would gain by a residence at Armford, where she would not be looked upon as a servant, but be my lady's own companion, and share the housekeeper's apartments. In short, so much was advanced in favour of Jeanie's excursion that the arrangement was completed, and her wardrobe, never in an untidy condition, soon made ready, Lady H. advising that her travelling outfit should be confined to as few things as possible, because she herself would supply deficiencies in Edinburgh. There was but brief time for farewells, less for crying, and not a moment for the other girls to feel jealous in, ere the big carriage commenced its homeward return.

The journey to Edinburgh was rendered more interesting to Jeanie by their pursuing much of the route which her father had traversed long, long ago. Objects rendered familiar to her by hearing him describe them were continually presented, and she did not fail thankfully to contrast her own pleasant experiences of travel with what must have been the feelings of the poor, weary, and footsore wanderer.

A month was passed in Edinburgh, and, when Jeanie had seen and enjoyed all the wonderful sights of Scotland's metropolis, they resumed their journey south, and in due time reached Armford Castle.

During the reign of Edward IV. a feudal fortalice was erected on the banks of the Eden, in Cumberland, and, its site abounding in the natural beauties of river scenery, was perhaps one of the most picturesque that could have been found throughout Britain. For hundreds of years it stood impregnable, its battlemented walls frowning above the water, and from its low-arched gateway many

a belted knight, with retinue of well-armed followers, went forth to take part in the feuds, forays, and fierce contests that so long agitated the Border counties. How or when the old fortress succumbed, either to time and decay, or the successful besieger, is not known, but from its ruins rose the present edifice of Armford Castle. The structure itself is modern, but its walls, and the stones of which the walls are composed, bear unmistakable signs of the wear and tear of centuries, and are surmounted with battlements closely copied from those of the original structure, which give it an antiquated appearance, quite in keeping with its historical associations. Its windows command lovely views of the river for a long distance on either side, stretching from the weir on one hand, where the waters tumble in a white foaming torrent over the rocky barrier, to the quaint old bridge on the other, through which they finally disappear.

The castle stands in a natural amphitheatre, enclosed by wooded hills, which, receding from the banks, form a small park, fringed with ancestral oaks, lordly beeches, and towering elms, wherein a colony of rooks have dwelt for ages. Opposite are the sylvan heights of the Cooms, with their oak plantations and green strips of pasture, while to the southward rises Blaze Fell, covered with purple heather, and presenting a rich contrast to the ever-changing hues of the forest. From the castle northward, and crossing the bridge, a winding road ascends to the village of Armford, where nestle the homes of a sturdy peasant race of Cumbrians, and beyond this again lies a wide expanse of richly cultivated country, studded with the scattered dwellings of industrious farmers.

It was autumn when the General's party returned home, and the woods, though still presenting a variegated

beauty, were being rapidly stripped of their foliage by the fierce west winds that swayed the lofty branches to and fro, disturbing the clamorous rooks and sweeping the fallen leaves into the river, which engulfed them in its waters and bore them away to the sea.

These were halcyon days to Jeanie, and while the fine weather continued, her walks amid woodland glades, so different in their luxuriance from anything she had seen at home, afforded her unceasing delight. Not less pleasant was it on stormy days to sit by the windows of the housekeeper's cosy room, with a wood fire crackling, and all around her snug and comfortable, watching the wild elemental strife, without experiencing any of the old Eldmuir anxiety as to the safety of the thatch.

When the wind raged fiercely, and the rain pattered loudly against the casement, an old green parrot, kept in the housekeeper's room, often amused Jeanie by its increased vivacity. On some of these occasions Polly might almost have been believed to give utterance to her feelings by saying, "What a miserable lot these rooks are—and those sparrows—how excessively vulgar! Look at me—I'm aristocratic—and refined—and consequently comfortable. I was never meant to be blown about—certainly not." But the parrot's linguistic attainments only enabled her to throw out a delicate hint about sugar, and to communicate the often expressed intelligence that she was "Pretty Polly," which, of course, included everything.

Polly became attached to Jeanie, about whom there must have been something unusual to call forth such condescension, and Mrs. Harris, the housekeeper, quickly came to love her, as much for her winning ways as that she was the daughter of one who had saved her honoured master's life. Old Mary, the still-room maid, who, with

all her kind-heartedness, held very strict notions concerning girls, unbent considerably in favour of Jeanie, treated her with marked affability, and initiated her into the mysteries of pastry-making and other culinary arts. My lady often sent for Jeanie to sit by her, and for hours would be delighted with the maiden's artless talk of her Highland home and her friends at Eldmuir. Thus time passed rapidly, but almost imperceptibly—scarcely had the trees doffed their leafy garments and consigned them to the winds ere it was winter; hardly had the red holly-berries shrunk and dried, and the evergreens that decked the castle hall for Merry Christmas faded, ere the singing of the birds heralded the spring! It was a dream of bliss—a fairy tale—that sojourn of Jeanie at Armford Castle! What she saw, what she learned, and all that she did during that happy but fleeting twelve months, would occupy more time and space than we have at our disposal. She had not shed a tear on leaving home, but she shed many now that it was time to return; and she did not forget to thank God, just as her good friend Mrs. Barbara would have had her do, for so much happiness.


The under-steward, who was to escort her to Eldmuir, was commissioned not only to see Jeanie safely home, but to bring back Jessie with him. It seemed as if the kind General and his wife could never do enough for their humble Scottish friends! So Jessie in her turn also went and stayed a year in Cumberland, and became, as might be expected, a little spoiled. Mrs. Harris considered the girl the plague of her life, yet for all that she could not help loving her; and old Mary, it was said, had never before been known to put up with so much from any one as from her; while all the lads in the neighbourhood, it was affirmed, had well-nigh broken

their hearts for the love of this beautiful Highland lassie. During her stay Jessie acquired some faults that her friends had not before observed, and a few airs that did not naturally belong to her; but it is hard to say what does and what does not belong in the way of licence to a girl so unusually handsome and lively as was this wayward sprite!

Shortly after her return home, Jessie went with the intention of spending a month at Inverary with Mrs. Barbara, who was anxious to see what effect her stay at Armford had produced on her character. In three weeks, however, she was sent back again—why, she herself did not exactly know, but her mother did, and kept the knowledge to herself. We, being privileged, may just look over Jean's shoulder and peruse the close of Mrs. Barbara's letter to her on this occasion:—

“Jessie has formed an acquaintance with a young carpenter which I have thought best to discountenance, and therefore send her home rather earlier than I intended. I do not know anything ill of the young man, but he is unsteady in his pursuits, and Jessie is quite a girl yet,” &c., &c.

Jean, being thus warned, wisely determined in her own mind to maintain a strict watch over her daughter; but how she succeeded, or how she failed, in preventing what she feared, time will reveal.



## CHAPTER XXIV.

“O what a glory doth this world put on  
For him who, with a fervent heart, goes forth  
Under the bright and glorious sky, and looks  
On duties well perform'd, and days well spent!  
For him the wind, ay, and the yellow leaves,  
Shall have a voice, and give him eloquent teachings.  
He shall so hear the solemn hymn, that Death  
Has lifted up for all, that he shall go  
To his long resting-place without a tear.”

LONGFELLOW.

DURING the summer of 1830, at which time we resume the history of our Highland family, reports were spreading in the neighbourhood—vague and unfounded rumours they might be—that were detrimental to the character of the Laird. Since his accession to the estates, the young Laird had so far abandoned the habits of his father as to spend much of his time away from his paternal acres. Stories of great doings in London, and of large sums lost at cards, a vice not uncommon amongst the sons of landed proprietors, whose ready command of money and utter inexperience of the world led them into the haunts and company of sharpers, were told from one to another, and it became evident that the young Laird had indeed fallen into the society of men with whom his honoured father would have scorned to associate.

The hospitality of the Tower, always proverbial, was



now extended to very different parties from the jolly hunting squires and Highland lairds who in "auld lang syne" feasted and revelled in the old banqueting-hall. The manners and customs of the metropolis called for greater expenditure in the way of furniture, wines, and cooking, than would formerly have been considered needful, and by such reckless extravagance the whole estate became embarrassed, and was soon heavily mortgaged. A Mr. Wallincourt, with his son, a dissipated roué and gambler, and others of the same class, spent their hunting seasons at the Tower. It was even whispered that Mr. Wallincourt had in some unexplained way been of considerable service to the Laird during his repeated and lengthy sojourns in London, and was said at the present time to hold a claim on the property which, had he been minded to enforce, would have rendered his friend and host a landless man.

Reports such as these, although generally exaggerated, have usually some foundation in solid truth; and true it was that Mr. Wallincourt was now staying at the Tower, feasted and fêted to his heart's content, and so persistent in his inquiries about farms and things a visitor could hardly have cared about, that the tenants shook their heads, and whispered dim forebodings of evil to come. How far they were right in their suppositions, that he would yet be master of these broad lands, will appear in the sequel; but, before chronicling those events and changes, we must proceed to introduce other characters as about to become intimately connected with Duncan and his family.

In a small cottage, very near the Laird's Mansion, lived Dugald McAlpine, who, it will be remembered, had been at one time consulted by Duncan regarding a farm he desired to occupy. Dugald, being the oldest

retainer in the service of the Laird of Loch Awe, was well known throughout the country. He was born on the estate when his father was shepherd, and the young lad's earliest occupations consisted in tending sheep upon the fells and performing light duties about the house.

As he grew up he was raised to the post of gillie, and always accompanied the Laird on his hunting and fishing expeditions. As no one knew the wild recesses and precipitous passes of the mountains so well as Dugald, he became indispensable to his master, and was the earliest attendant and tutor in field sports of the then young heir, who was now Laird himself. Long service gained for Dugald the respect and attention of the other servitors of the Tower, as well as deference from the tenants who rented small farms in the neighbourhood, and whose dwellings, huddled together without order or arrangement, constituted the village known as the "Toon," situated close by. Dugald had charge of the deer-hounds and other dogs kept for the purpose of the chase, as well as the shelties or ponies, which were employed to carry home the game from the mountains, amid whose almost inaccessible solitudes the red-deer were generally found. He acted also as under-bailiff to the factor of the estate, Mr. Kinnaird, and thus became acquainted with the farming capabilities of his neighbours, and, being enabled to advise his employers on many matters of importance, was raised considerably in the estimation of all over whom he exercised authority.

His wife, Jenny McAlpine, once a blooming young dairy-maid, had been dead some years, but had left her husband, as pledges of affection, three healthy sons, who now lived with him. Alexander, or "Sandy," the eldest, was a tall, broad-shouldered, handsome young Highlander with dark, curly locks, and eyes that betokened

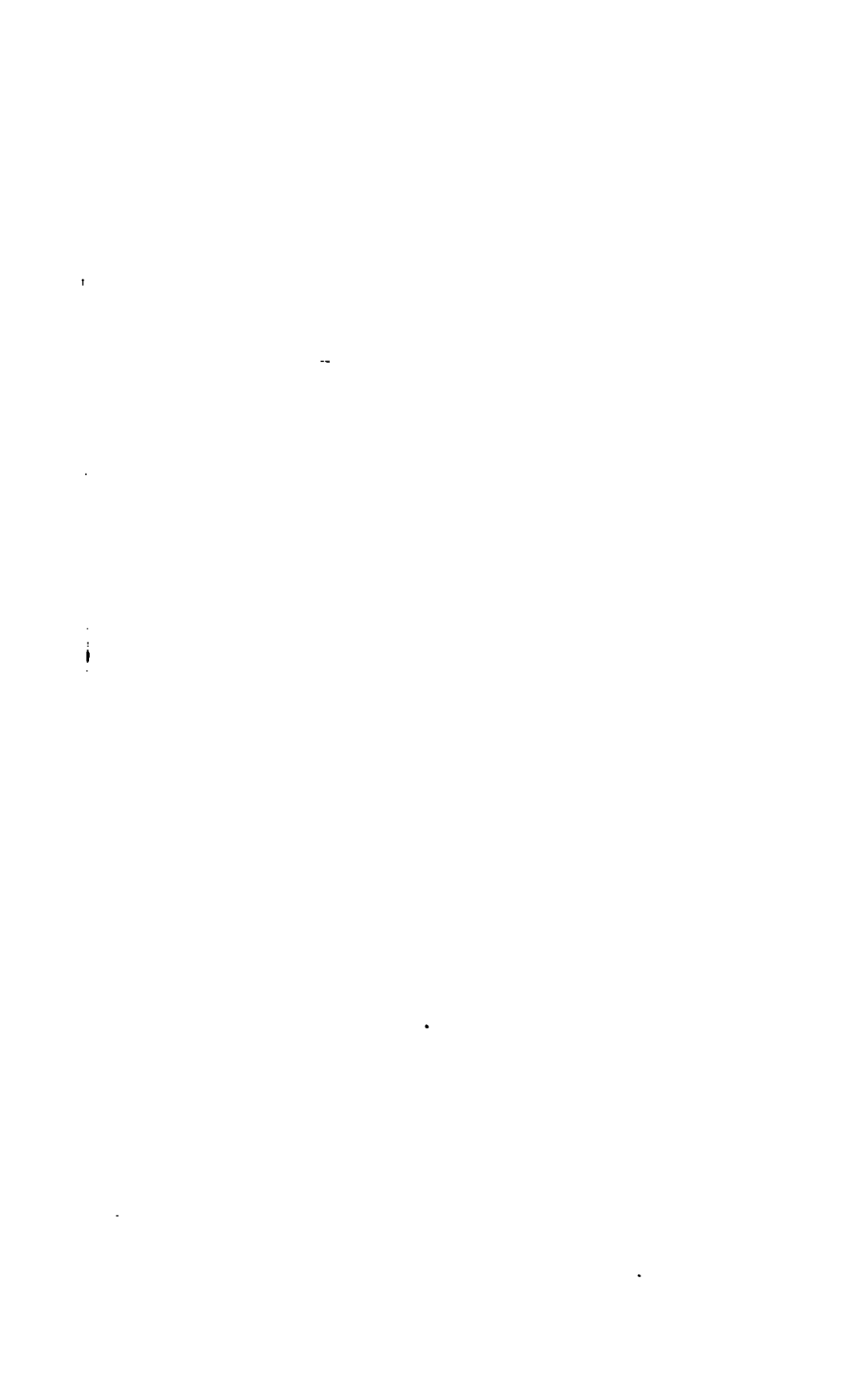
good temper, as well as kindness of disposition. The lad was steady and industrious, relieved his father in the duties of shepherd, and was always in attendance on the hunting-field, where success was deemed uncertain unless Sandy McAlpine formed one of the party. Evan, and Roderick, the younger sons, were both of a quiet, studious character, and, by the Laird's kindness, were enabled to attend school at Inverary during the winter months, while the summer and autumn were spent at their father's, and, during these seasons, their services were much in request by the Laird and his friends, who came to shoot or fish in the Glen. Sandy, from his good-nature as well as from his prowess in the athletic games and sports common to the district, was a universal favourite, and many a "bonnie lassie" snooded her locks with much care and donned her best kirtle when she went to any merry-making at which Sandy was expected. Many a "bonnie lassie" would have thought twice ere she had said "na" to Sandy's addresses had they been paid her, but yet this Celtic Crichton roamed at large, heart-whole, and apparently without any special predilections. Sandy had at one time been a very indifferent church-goer; in fact, he had on several occasions received severe rebukes from the minister concerning his inattention to Sabbath duties, and the danger of setting a bad example to the youth of his village. Lately it appeared as though the minister's efforts had been successful, as the open countenance of the young man was now always to be seen in his father's accustomed seat. This change in the hitherto neglectful youth's habits had occurred shortly after the services at Eldmuir were discontinued and Duncan's family had begun to frequent the kirk of the larger parish or "Toon," and it was hinted that other causes beside the minister's exhortations were operating

in his mind to bring about this result. Dugald had been in the habit of frequently visiting Eldmuir, and always received a hearty welcome from Duncan, but while the heads of the two families thus became great friends, the younger members had remained almost entire strangers to each other. On one occasion, however, when Sandy conveyed a message from his father to old Alister, he met the two eldest daughters of Duncan. His bashfulness and awkward behaviour, at utter variance with his usual conduct, at this meeting, gave Jessie occasion to speak of him in no favourable terms—even to the extent of calling him a “daft clown,” for which she was sharply taken to task by Jeanie, and it is possible that their intimacy might never have improved had Eldmuir still possessed, as formerly, its character of a village, and its kirk not been abandoned.

The sacred edifice, wherein the inhabitants of a considerable district now met every Sabbath for Divine worship, was situated near the southern end of a loch, about six miles in length. At its northern extremity this loch was contracted and wound amongst precipitous mountains. Beetling crags overhung the water and cast dark shadows beneath them. The finest trout lurked in these sombre bays, and were seldom disturbed except by solitary herons, whose white plumage might be distinguished from afar as they stood in sleepy contemplation on the pebbly beach and gazed searchingly into the transparent depths. At the spot where the lake emerged from its rocky barriers and expanded into a broad sheet of water, there was a stone pier on either shore and between them a ferry-boat plied several times during the day, carrying across the loch large numbers of sheep and Highland cattle which had been brought from remote places to be driven by this route to Inverary. From the

ferry southward the hills receded, and undulating ~~hills~~, in some places covered with heather, and in others ~~richly~~ cultivated, descended to the banks of the loch, and were dotted here and there with cottages, which, ~~embowered~~ in groves of birch and stunted oaks, presented a vivid contrast to the dark and often extensive fir plantations of the heights.

Sparkling rivulets murmured through mimic ravines, in which flourished hazel bushes, twining brambles, and yellow-flowered whins, and at the embouchure of one of these streams on a small extent of greensward stood the kirk. To this sacred spot landwards, footpaths led in several directions, while, from the water, the approach was had by means of a cobble, smaller in size than the ferry-boat above, but still large enough to hold a considerable number of church-goers in perfect safety. By this means it was that the inhabitants of the mill-house shortened their journey to the kirk, and thus saved more than two miles in distance. A lovely picture of quiet innocent country life was that to be seen Sunday after Sunday around the grey stone jetty to which the cobble was moored, for on those mornings the country people from different quarters assembled together and waited for the coming of the minister. Children, each carrying a bible, nestled amongst the blooming heather, and compared notes concerning their last week's amusements; young men and blushing lasses exchanged lively repartees, quickly composing their features into a semblance of sobriety, lest the minister might arrive suddenly and detect them; farmers spoke of sheep and bullocks, the prospects of harvest, and many things relating to this life; the aged told each other of their several ailments, and communicated sovereign remedies for sicknesses of all kinds; and the bright sun shone down upon all, its





W. J. BOUTWELL

GOING TO THE CHURCH

JAMES THOMAS, N.

influence irradiating the various colours of their Sunday garments that were as much in harmony with nature's surroundings as were those of the wild flowers themselves.

Every bonnet was doffed, and lowly curtseyed the women when with slow and solemn step, the minister at length came up. If his black coat was rusty or polished at the seams, if his buckled shoes bore patches, and his dark hose were carefully, but visibly darned, the respect shown him was none the less, for it was not the dress he wore, but the man himself and his sacred office, that they regarded and paid honest respect to. He was always first to take his place in the boat, and, when the Eldmuir family were there, after the rowers had taken their places, old Elspeth was tenderly assisted in. Duncan, Jean, and their two younger children generally made up this last party, for it was not the only time that the boat crossed to the kirk, and her arrival was anxiously expected by previous comers, as well as by the village girls, including Jeanie, Jessie, and Elsie, who, on fine mornings, for the sake of the pleasant walk and perhaps pleasanter chat enjoyed on such occasions, took a longer route by the end of the lake. The boatmen, led by the minister himself, chanted a quaint old psalm tune while they rowed, keeping time to the regular splash of their oars; and, as the little vessel sped over the glassy surface, whereon every fleeting cloud was distinctly mirrored, and amid which their own shadows seemed to sport and play, the holy calm of nature breathed a spirit of peace and love, and a silent prayer as it were of thanksgiving to God rose simultaneously from the hearts of all.



## CHAPTER XXV.

“Maiden, that read'st this simple rhyme,  
Enjoy thy youth, it will not stay;  
Enjoy the fragrance of thy prime,  
For, O! it is not always May!”

LONGFELLOW.

It was a peaceful, quiet, and lovely Sabbath afternoon towards the close of harvest. The birds had hushed their singing, the bees, usually so laborious, seemed reluctant to move, and flew drowsily from flower to flower; the sheep had lain themselves down among the bracken, to enjoy the warm sunshine; and the cows stood gazing dreamily around, only their tails appearing to possess life and motion as they whisked away the insects. Excepting these, all other things and creatures were at perfect rest. Within-doors the peat fire extinguished by the rays of the sun, lay a white heap of ashes, and in the arm-chair beside it sat old Elspeth fast asleep. Maude, with her little curly head resting against grannie's knee, was asleep also. She had grown weary with looking over her pictured story-book, which, now fallen from her lap, lay partly on the top of pussy, who, when it fell, had listlessly opened one eye, and then, without moving, dozed off again. Jeanie, seated at the round table, had been reading, but the book was now pushed away, and with her head resting on her hand, she was in deep

thought. In the next room a mother watched over her child. Little Steenie had been ailing, and Jean having hushed him into a troubled slumber, was anxiously bending over his couch, afraid even to imprint a kiss on his lips, lest she might awaken him. Duncan was away at afternoon service; Jessie wandering, no one knew whither; and Allan engaged in some out-door pastime, which he could not leave until the declining sun should warn him that it was time to fetch the cows to fold.

The silence that pervaded the little dwelling was so expressive of holy Sabbath quiet, that the clear ringing tones of the clock striking four, seemed to introduce a feeling of discord. Jeanie looked up when she heard it, but it called her to no duty that it was necessary then to perform, so her thoughts returned into their interrupted channel, and led her to revel in visions of dream-land. The shadow from the window crept silently across the floor; now it rested on Jeanie's shoulder, now on her rich brown hair; now it had passed her altogether, and was mounting the clock case, when the lusty hallooing of her young brother and the plaintive lowing of the cows aroused her from her reverie. She laid aside her book, and putting on a white apron, went out to her usual evening task of milking. Old Elspeth assisted her with this in the morning, but was accustomed to prolong her afternoon nap until late in the evening. Jessie might have helped, but was seldom disposed so to do, and Elsie, though anxious to aid, was not yet permitted, so Jeanie performed it alone. She liked this part of her duties, and never considered it laborious, although there were six cows awaiting her, each one turning its eyes inquiringly towards its young mistress as she approached.

Jeanie paused and considered awhile before commencing.

Her grandmother was asleep and might not be awakened; mother was with Steenie, Jessie could not be found, and Allan was far away with his dog by this time, so Jeanie said, "Well, I suppose I must do it myself."

She had but just begun to milk when Jessie made her appearance, flushed and heated with running, her hair slightly blown about, but her dress the very pink of neatness; for Jessie always liked "to look fine." She spent much time over the construction of her own dresses—needlessly, thought prudent Jeanie—and perhaps their mother thought the same, but as she was the beauty of the family, and allowed to do just as she pleased, they never spoke to her about it.

Duncan at times teased her about these little conceits, saying, half in fun and half in earnest, "you'll make but a poor farmer's wife, lass," and to this Jessie would reply, "I'm not going to marry a farmer, father;" and her mother often sighed and wished "that journey to England had never been taken; not that it has done Jeanie any harm," she would add; "but it's made Jessie so unsettled."

That was just the most expressive word she could have used; Jessie *was* unsettled, and, without in the least knowing why, rather discontented.

So Jessie came and stood by her sister as she was milking.

"I wish you would go and put an apron on and come and help me," said Jeanie; "grannie's asleep, and mother's with Steenie, for the bairn's ailing. You wouldn't hurt your braw kirtle a bit, Jessie." Jessie looked down at her smart merino petticoat and pouted. If possible, she would have made her pretty face ugly, but that she could not do.

"Jeanie," she said, "I'm sure I would often help you,

but you are not pleased with my milking—you never were, and that's truth."

"You can do it well enough if you like," replied Jeanie, "and I never said anything against you but once, when you left the brindled cow half milked. Come, Jessie, lass, pin up your gown and take the red cow, she's easiest of all, then you can finish with Blackie, and I'll get nicely through with the other four, so we'll be done before gloaming sets in."

Jessie stepped daintily into the house, returning shortly with her costume better adapted for the work before her, and then bringing a leglin, or milk-pail, and her small stool, she sat down and commenced milking the red cow. For some time the two girls pursued their task in silence, and nothing was heard but the steady purr, purr, of the rich milk as it streamed into the pails. Then Jessie stopped, and, falling into a deep study, apparently quite forgot what she was about.

"Jeanie!" at length she said, in a timid, constrained voice.

"What is it?" was the laconic reply.

"I want to speak to you about something, if you'll promise never to mention it—never, at least, till I give you leave."

"If it's a secret you'd best not tell me," said Jeanie, "as I've no secrets of my own, I don't want any other body's—I don't see the good of them."

"Oh, but," said Jessie, in an injured tone, "I want your advice, Jeanie; you're older than me, and know many things better than me—and—and I'm just miserable about it."

Hereupon Jessie burst into tears. Jeanie said nothing for a short time, but went steadily on with her work.

Jessie having finished her cow, rose from the stool, and putting her pail on one side, came up closer to her sister.

"Have you nothing to say, Jeanie?"

"I'm just thinking," replied the elder girl, "that if you are so very miserable, there's One we know to whom we may carry our sorrows and who will comfort us in all our distresses."

"Oh, aye," said Jessie, "but I'm not that sober-minded and religious as you are, Jeanie; sometimes I wish I was—and then"—a sigh completed her speech; and there was a great deal conveyed in that sigh.

Jeanie would have been only too ready to receive her sister's confidence, and listen with sympathy to the story of her troubles, but the strictness of her education, and the teaching of Mistress Barbara and her brother, had led her to connect the idea of wickedness with keeping a secret. She never remembered having done anything she was afraid to tell, and her sister's manner not a little alarmed her.

"I don't know whether I'll promise to keep your secret, Jessie," she said; "perhaps I'd best not. I never hid anything from father or mother in all my life, and you are a deal younger than me, you know."

"Not so much," exclaimed Jessie resentfully; "but I'll tell you whether or no, and if ever you mention it above your breath, I'll not speak to you again—for—for ever so long."

"Well what is it?" said Jeanie, rather amused; "say your say, and we'll judge of it afterwards."

"Stand ower. Bide still, you daft thing." These expressions Jessie addressed to the black cow, which had taken up an awkward position, and was annoyed by the flies. Then she took another pail and her stool. She was in no hurry—she seemed to be considering whether to speak or not. For two or three minutes she milked as quickly as possible, then, stopping again, she said, "Jeanie!"

“ Well.”

“ I’ve got a joe ” (lover).

“ A what ! ” cried Jeanie, as near as possible upsetting her pail. “ Lassie, lassie, whatever are you talking about ? ”

“ Just that,” replied Jessie. “ What’s about it ? ”

“ And who’s the laddie ? ” inquired Jeanie, “ and where-ever did you meet him ? ”

“ I saw him first at Inverary,” said Jessie, “ and I’ve met him at the ‘ Toon ’ sometimes ; and I’ve seen him—but that’s no matter.”

“ May be it is matter ! ” exclaimed Jeanie ; “ but who is it ? you haven’t told me that yet, you know.”

“ O just Jamie Cummings,” was the answer, delivered as indifferently as possible.

“ That ne’er-do-weel ! ” disdainfully replied the elder sister, “ I wonder at you, Jess.”

“ Wha’s a ne’er-do-weel ? ” cried Jessie, breaking out with broad Scotch, in her excitement. “ What richt hae you to be spiken ill o’ the lad ? he never harmed you, that I ken.”

“ I’m not saying he did,” replied Jeanie quietly, “ but every one knows that he’s just a shiftless callant, and doesn’t know his own mind two days together.”

“ Hoo d’ye ken that ? ”

“ I’ve heard father speaking about him, and he says that the lad went first to be a schoolmaster, then he was a blacksmith, and now he’s a carpenter ; that’s changeable like, isn’t it ? and rather shiftless ? ”

“ And wasn’t father a farmer, then a fisher, then a sojer, and now a farmer again ? may be that isn’t changeable ? ”

“ Oh if you’re going to speak against your own father,” said Jeanie, “ I’ll not listen to you. But, Jessie, you’re

over young to think of such things yet ; and, moreover, I doubt father will not be pleased with you taking up with Jamie Cummings any way."

"Well, if I'm young I can wait like your ainsell, Jeanie," and, laughing, the young girl commenced to sing—

"A Hieland lad ma love was born,  
The lowland laws he held in scorn,  
Still he was faithfu' ti'll his clan,  
My gallant, brave John Hielandman."

"Oh, Jessie, Jessie, on the Sabbath day ! Shame on you !" said Jeanie.

"I clean forgot it," answered Jessie, throwing her arms around her sister's neck, and kissing her affectionately.

Jeanie could not suppress a smile, as she said, "A queer Hielandman yon joe of yours would make ; he's from Glasgow, is he not ?"

"Oh, I wasn't meaning Jamie, you ken, but your ain joe, Jeanie, lass."

"Jessie !"

"Oh you needn't look so astonished, minny ; did I not see you in the kirk this morning looking more at Sandy McAlpine than ever you did at the minister ?"

"Jessie," exclaimed her sister, "I never spoke more than two words to Sandy McAlpine in all my life."

"Well—you looked a bookful," said the imperturbable Jessie.

"I hope," said Jeanie, "that I know my duty better than to be looking at folks in the kirk ; and it's a pity your own eyes were not better employed than in watching me."

"Well, I had to look at something, and you were nearest to me," replied Jessie, "and if you were not tired, I'm sure I was, and wouldn't deny it. When a minister

preaches like that to eighteenthly, and then, instead of letting folks out, as he should have done, just goes over the heads of his discourse again, for further edification! it was far worse than Alister reading the parliamentary news" (Jessie was working herself into quite a state of excitement), "and they're bad enough. I'm sure one half the folks were asleep, and the other half just wishing they were—and I heard, with my own ears, old Mause lamenting as plain as plain could be, that her fire would be out, and there would be nothing but 'cauld kail for her gude man's Sunday's dinner.'"

Here Jessie stopped, quite out of breath.

"Oh, lassie, lassie!" cried Jeanie, "you should not make light of sacred things, but it is indeed true that the preaching of the Gospel is foolishness to them who believe not."

Jessie always endeavoured to escape from her sister's lectures when she could; she was not naturally irreverent, but religion had not yet produced that impression on her which it had on her quieter sister. She answered lightly and carelessly, "Foolishness! It would be foolish if you stand there preaching and me listening till it grows as dark as midnight, and the milk not siled, and the fire out, and the pot not boiling, and father coming home directly, and no supper ready."

Jeanie sighed. "Will nothing ever sober Jessie?" she thought.

Oh, if she could but have seen a little way into the future! There may be a time coming, and not so far off, when that heart, now light and gay, will find life's burden full heavy to bear. Jessie's youth was as yet all sunshine and holiday, for "coming events had not cast their shadows before them," and her path of life was bright, with hope and happiness.

The girls took up their pails of milk and went into the



house, and while Jessie siled or strained it, putting it away in the dairy, Jeanie relit the fire, began to prepare the supper, and woke up her grandmother. By-and-by Jean, who had been asleep by the side of her sick child, now resting peacefully and evidently better, also came in, and Elsie and Allan returned from paying a visit to old Alister. Lastly, Duncan came back from the afternoon service at the kirk.

When all were seated round the supper-table, Jessie somewhat thoughtlessly asked her father "if there was any news?"

"News!" quoth Duncan. "Is this a day to be asking about news? If I told you the gist of the afternoon's discourse it would not please you, may be. No, no, we must have news on the Sabbath day no less. Well, I have no news, forbye that there's going to be a grand hunting from the Tower to-morrow, if that's news worth telling; it will likely be to please that Southron chiel, Maister Wallincourt they call him, but there's always some daffin going on up yonder now."

"If Dugald McAlpine speaks the truth," said Elspeth, "it's dootfu' whether the rich Englisher will no be laird himself afore lang."

"Be quiet, mother," replied Duncan, "you don't know what you're talking about; but that minds me that Dugald was saying the laird's two fields of English wheat are just reaped, and there'll be canny gleaning there to-morrow; so if you lasses want any wheat flour for your new year's feast, you can just go and get it there. I wouldn't mind keeping a little myself for seed, and trying it down in the long croft next spring."

"I'll go!" cried Jessie.

"No, you'll not go, my lass," said her mother, "I know better than to be sending you clashma clavering with all

the lads of the country-side, and then to be coming home two hours after gloaming with a handful of straw for your day's work. No, no, you'll just stop at home and help me with the carding and housewife skep ; Jeanie can go."

"You'll have to be away before sunrise, Jeanie," said her father, "or they'll get the start of you. Best go round the head of the loch on your way there, and you may get across in the ferry-boat coming back. Jean, you can give Jeanie two bawbees for the boat before you go to bed."

Soon after this conversation had taken place the inmates of the mill-house were all sleeping soundly in their beds, doubtlessly dreaming of many possible or impossible things, but assuredly in midst of all the chaos and subjects that passed through their brains, not one of them dreamed of what the eventful morrow was destined to bring forth.

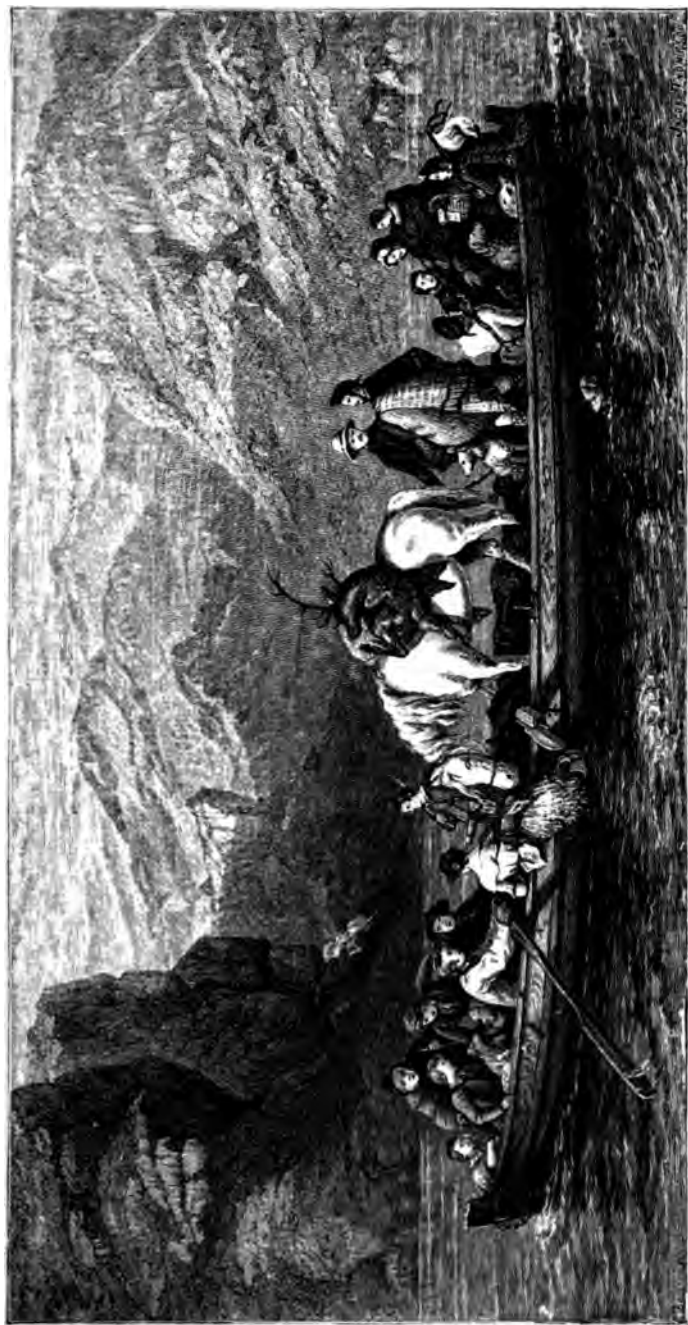
## CHAPTER XXVI.

“Waken, lords and ladies gay !  
On the mountain dawns the day ;  
All the jolly chase is here,  
With hawk and horse, and hunting spear ;  
Hounds are in their couples yelling,  
Hawks are whistling, horns are knelling,  
Merrily, merrily, mingle they,  
Waken, lords and ladies gay !”

SIR WALTER SCOTT.

ERE the sun had risen Jeanie was up and away, enjoying the freshness of the morning, as with fleet steps she sped onward, brushing the dew off the heather, and waking the moor fowl in the sheltered hollows. Proceeding by the north shore of the loch, which lay directly in her way, she reached the bottom lands of another glen, wherein lay the fields belonging to the laird, which had been sown with English wheat, and here we shall leave her to pursue her pleasant task with others of her own class, early on the field like herself, with some of whom she was acquainted.

In the neighbourhood of the Tower great preparations were being made, and numbers of gillies and idlers had assembled, attracted thither by the news of the grand deer-stalking fixed to take place on that day. Some gentlemen were expected to join the party after they had reached the ground, but still a rather imposing procession set out from the “Toon.” The two younger sons



JACOB THOMPSON

*THE FERRY BOAT.*

WM. BALDINGGALL



of Dugald were highly elated with the important duties allotted to them. Evan led an old white sheltie, which was intended to bring home on its back the result of the day's sport; while Roderick had charge of the hounds occasionally used for tracking a wounded deer. In this part of the proceedings the young lad was assisted by Jamie Cummings, who had contrived to be present ostensibly to aid Roderick, but really to witness the fun. This youth, who ambitiously aspired to the hand of Jessie, the belle of the country, had succeeded in getting engaged at the Tower in the capacity of carpenter. The laird's extensive alterations in the interior of the building gave employment to a large staff of mechanics, and Jamie, who had seen and fallen in love with Jessie at Inverary, lost no time in procuring a situation as near to his sweetheart as possible. He was, as Jeanie had said, a Glasgow man, twenty-three years of age, handsome, merry, and, in short, a "hail, good fellow, well met" sort of body. Jamie's parents, respectable Glasgow citizens, were said to be in very good circumstances, and their son had received a liberal education. He started in life as a kind of usher in a small school at Helensburgh, but growing tired of the monotony of such a career, which he said was too lazy for him, went to the other extreme, and engaged himself to a blacksmith. This calling was abandoned as necessitating too much hard work, and Jamie took a middle course, and learned the trade of a carpenter, at which he earned such good wages that he could afford to be idle three days in the week. He had discovered the weak side of McAlpine, whose word was law at the Tower, and adroitly contrived to worm himself into the old man's good graces; hence probably he was enabled to obtain a holiday on this interesting occasion. Sandy was by far the most

important character of the day, and, fusil on shoulder, marched at the head of the party. A thorough-bred cockney who acted as valet to Mr. Wallincourt, and whose witty sayings and quaint humour rendered him extremely popular, attached himself to Sandy, for whom he had conceived a great respect and annoyed not a little by addressing him as "Mister McHolpin." The remainder of the party followed as closely and orderly as the rough and difficult road permitted.

The hunt was conducted on the same principles that have guided them ever since the days of Macbeth, and have become traditional. The clansmen, tenants' sons, and others, having scoured the hills since daybreak, gradually drew together, forming a circle technically called a "tinchel," which enclosed the herd of deer, then they drove them slowly down the glen where the sportsmen were stationed, and who displayed their skill by picking off stragglers as they emerged from cover.

The day's sport had been successful, and the hunters separated as they had met on the field, each party taking a share of the game. The laird and his friend, with their immediate attendants, and with a fine buck tied on the back of the white pony, took their way towards the Tower, and about the close of the afternoon reached the loch, along the banks of which Jeanie had walked in the morning. The unwieldly "ferry-boat" before mentioned, which plied across the loch, formed not a speedy but a convenient means of getting from shore to shore, as the road leading along the banks was a mere sledge-track, winding in and out among the rocks, and over abutting headlands, and in some places so intersected with bogs that it would have required considerable experience to guide the party by it in safety. The boat in which they embarked was managed by a couple of old

Highland boatmen, sturdy weather-beaten "chiels," belonging to a class of fresh-water sailors, whom the introduction of steam has almost done away with, although many of their descendants, now better educated, and in some degree modernized, may still be met with forming the crews, and even acting as captains, of small steamers that ply up and down the lochs of the Western Highlands. The old pony, bearing a noble stag, stepped down carefully and knowingly into the boat; this duty having evidently formed part of its education.

Some few people had already arrived to take advantage of the ferry-boat, and amongst the rest the laird's piper, who, having been left behind in the morning, now met the returning party, and the wild shrill notes of his instrument, as he played "a welcome," echoed far up the valley. The laird and his English friend took up a position behind the pony, which stood in the centre of the boat, and, standing there alone, contemplated, probably with very different feelings, the picturesque scenery, and listened, probably, with very different sentiments to the piper's music, as it disturbed the quiet autumnal silence, and mingled its strains with the murmur of the distant waterfall. Sandy and his would-be friend the cockney, the piper, and a gipsy woman, well known throughout the country, and celebrated for her fortune-telling powers, were seated in the stern. Evan stood by the pony, while Roderick and Jamie, with one or two of the dogs, remained in the bows and helped to quiet the fears of an old woman who, with her grandchild, was on her way to the "Toon," and was not a little nervous at being in such grand (and, with regard to the hounds, in such savage) company. There was, however, yet another passenger of whom we shall shortly speak.

All being arranged, the boat was loosed from its moor-



ings, and the veteran Highlanders propelled it slowly from the pier.

As they cleared the rocky promontory, and reached the centre of the loch, a magnificent scene of wild and imposing grandeur was disclosed. Mighty precipices rose abruptly from the water in sullen majesty, frowning defiance from their storm-riven frontlets, whereon the fierce tempestuous war of centuries had raged in vain. So vast and towering were their barren heights that the huge rents and fissures, records of volcanic disturbance in primæval ages, appeared only as dark lines on the sombre grey surface. Even the foaming torrent that in a tortuous channel descended the fern-clad slopes, and hurled itself with headlong fury over the rocks, forming cascades of wondrous beauty, was to the eye entirely motionless. The seething mass of waters appeared only as a thread of silver winding hither and thither amongst the rugged steepes. Its sullen roar, subdued by distance, and repeated by the reverberant echoes, fell on the ear with a murmuring cadence, like the music of summer waves rippling in ceaseless monotony on some sandy shore. The faded grass that clothed the mountain sides appeared to shine with a pale golden radiance, produced by the slanting rays of the western sun, and the mountains themselves, gradually ascending in successive heights, their several shades of colour softened and blended together, became more and more aerially transparent, until the loftiest peaks, almost disappearing in the blue expanse, seemed even less real than the amber-tinted clouds that floated around them.

On went the huge boat, cleaving the mirrored reflections that rested on the smooth still surface, and when the circling eddies, that for a while disturbed them, had quietly subsided, there were no more evidences of so much

and such varying life having passed over the spot than appears in those effete and effortless lives which, though existing by thousands, fade away without leaving behind them one solitary "footprint on the sands of time;" but probably not one amongst all the voyagers in the ferry-boat cast a passing thought on the sublime and lovely scenery everywhere surrounding them. All appeared to have their minds too much occupied with each other, and with the incidents of the hunt, for an admiring contemplation of nature, and we are therefore, perforce, obliged to return to every-day life, and to the chronicling of commonplace matters.

"An hoo's a' wi' ye the day, Maggie?" said Sandy, addressing the old gipsy woman for want, it might be, of something better to do. Sandy was in a capital humour, having been very successful with his shooting, and was now enjoying his pipe, which, after the day's exertion, was soothing and refreshing.

"Ou gaily's and brawly's, thank ye muckle for speerin," answered she thus accosted.

"I have been long wishing to see you, Maggie," continued Sandy, "for if you must ken, I was thinking o' asking you just ta spey ma fortune."

"Deed, Sandy," replied the gipsy, "there's nane in a' Argyleshire I wad be sae blythe to pleesure as yoursell—but—an it's truth I'm speaking—there's mony a ane wha I kenned weel mysell forgathered wi' ill luck just through speeren intill the future and meeting it half way."

The old woman, generally as eager to tell fortunes as she was in the present instance averse to do so, was for some reason or other evidently reluctant to oblige Sandy in this matter. Sandy was, however, persistent, and at length a dram of whisky was the means of unloosing Maggie's tongue. She bade Sandy hold up his

right hand, which she said “ought to have been crossed wi’ siller, but as folks did na tak muckle o’ that pelf to a hunting wi’ them, she wad just call round at his feyther’s the morn, and may be he wadna’ mind leaving oot a few taties for puir Maggie.”

Sandy promised that her request should be faithfully complied with, so after contemplating the young sportsman’s upturned palm for a few minutes, Maggie uttered the following rude distich :—

“ When twa forgather in crossing the loch,  
As sure as deeth they’ll plight their troth.”

This quaint prophecy greatly amused the parties in the stern of the boat, and many guesses were hazarded as to who the other party might be, and when it might be expected to take place.

The gipsy wife was annoyed at their incredulity, and relapsed into sullen silence.

“ My dear Mister McHolpin,” said the valet.

“ The deil tak ye and your Mister McOlpins !” cried the youth. “ Can ye no say Sandy ?”

“ Well, Mister Sandy, then, it appears to me halways, supposing that this respectable hold person may be relied upon, and that the hother party prophetically mentioned must be a female, that the young lady at present sleeping on Mistress Margaret’s back is to be your future—ahem—Missis McHol—ahem, Missis Sandy—she’s young—decidedly young—but that is a fault she may be expected to grow out of.”

The gipsy wife carried a female child slung in the folds of her cloak, and suspended over her shoulders. Upon hearing the young Englishman’s observation, she turned suddenly upon him, exclaiming, “ There’s mair lasses nor mine in the boat, ye uncivil southern loon, an it wad na

tak muckle to spey *your* fortune, seeing it's likely a hempen tow wull mak an end o't afore lang."

The old woman was now thoroughly exasperated, and stubbornly refused to answer any more questions. Sandy grew thoughtful and silent, the spae-wife's words seemed to him extremely mystical, and all his hopes centred round one whose face, it must be confessed, had proved a great attraction to draw him to church. Shortly afterwards he was induced to look over the side of the boat, attracted by hearing a considerable splashing in the water. The noise proceeded from the energetic efforts of a collie dog which had jumped overboard after his younger brother's Highland bonnet. While encouraging the animal, he cast his eyes forward, and there beheld a sight which at once banished all other subjects from his mind. It was the flutter of a female's garment. The fair owner had stepped on board just before the boat left the pier, and had taken a seat near the boatmen, and between them and the white pony, which together with its burden had hitherto concealed all before it from those seated at the stern.

Curiosity prompted Sandy to obtain a nearer view, and what he saw was calculated to give a new and very satisfactory interpretation to the gipsy's prophecy, and to awaken more than sanguine hopes in the young Highlander's bosom. The lassie was no other than Jeanie, who was returning with the produce of her day's gleanings under her arm.

When the boat reached the shore Sandy's duties were ended, or at all events, he chose to consider them so, for leaving his brothers to accompany the cortege, and giving his gun to Evan, he hastened away in the direction which the young girl had pursued. Jeanie was soon overtaken, and Sandy, inventing an excuse for visiting Eldmuir,

walked on by her side. It was only natural that he should relieve the girl of her burden, and by degrees the reserve on both sides broke down, so that on this occasion the youth fully retrieved his character, which from his bashful reticence at their former meeting had appeared in an unfavourable light. It was evident that night would overtake her ere Jeanie could possibly reach her father's dwelling, and though by no means a timid girl, she felt that the presence of her stalwart companion was very acceptable. Sandy had long wished for such an opportunity of escorting one whose fair face and winning manners had deeply impressed him, but though they chatted together as pleasantly and familiarly as if they had been friends from childhood, the young man afterwards remembered their very ordinary conversation with a dissatisfied feeling.

The acquaintance thus auspiciously begun was destined to occupy months in resolving itself into a lasting attachment, and we therefore leave them to follow their lonely road across the heather, and precede them to Eldmuir, to recount what is there doing.

## CHAPTER XXVII.

“Come under my plaidy, the night’s gau’n to fa’ ;  
Come in frae the cauld blast, the drift, and the snaw ;  
Come under my plaidy, and sit down beside me ;  
There’s room in’t, dear lassie ! believe me, for twa.  
Come under my plaidy, and sit down beside me,  
I’ll hap ye frae every cauld blast that can blow :  
O ! come under my plaidy, and sit down beside me,  
There’s room in’t, dear lassie ! believe me, for twa.”

MACNIEL.

THE day which had been so propitious for the hunting party, and also for Jeanie’s excursion, was drawing to a close, and as evening approached it became evident that a change was impending. The afternoon had been sultry and oppressive, sure signs that thunder might be expected, and such storms are often as sudden as they are severe in those mountainous regions. The sun descended into a bank of heavy rain-clouds, and long rays of light sloping downwards from the spot where the great luminary was fast disappearing, presented an appearance known to sailors as “Neptune setting up his rigging,” and proverbially as “Heralds of the storm.” The wind shortly veered into the south-west, rising in heavy puffs, and bringing with it torrents of rain. In the mill-house at Eldmuir the day’s labours were over. Jessie had been so unusually industrious that her mother

had at last condescended to applaud her. She had managed the milking without assistance, and had brought in her last pailful before the storm began. Allan had "bedded the cows down in the byre," as the night was likely to be unfit for them out in the pasture, and the family were now gathered cosily around the blazing fire, pitying Jeanie, and feeling their own comforts enhanced by listening to the howling wind and the continuous patter of the rain.

Old Elspeth sat by the "wee window" as long as it was light, watching the portents of the storm, and judging by the way in which the sheep and goats hurried down the hills, and the poultry fled for refuge under the peat stack, she declared "it would be an aufu' nicht," often and anxiously gazing up the fell road by which Jeanie might be expected to return home. The landscape being quickly obscured by the fast-gathering shades of night, she at length withdrew to her accustomed seat in the "ingle neuk," wishing the "lassie was safe at hame." As Elspeth sat thus, peering into the fire, she espied a flake of black grime hanging to the kail-pot. This is, or was in "the days of auld lang syne," considered an infallible prognostic of some one's unexpected arrival. It used to be called for that reason "a stranger," and thereupon the old woman began to prophecy that a visitor might be looked for, and that he was "no far awa'—" this latter clause of her prognostication being arrived at, and confirmed, by clapping her hands together, thus directing a puff of wind against the soot flake, which instantly became detached and flew up the "lum," or chimney. Jean, though deferring greatly to her mother's judgment in most things, was particularly averse to these fancies, and while placing the wooden bowls and horn spoons on the table, and bustling round in her usual

manner, she observed, "I wish, mother, you would leave these old wives' superstitions alone, and not be puffing the soot about, but just stir the kail, and not let it boil over and put the fire out. If my own bairn was safe at home, other folks might come and welcome. Though indeed I don't know who would come dandering here such a night as this, when the very rocks are reeking with rain."

"We have none so many visitors in the fine weather," said Jessie with a sigh, "not like as if we lived up in the 'Toon,' where one's neighbours might drop in for a crack sometimes, and a body might have a glimpse of the fine gentles that come to see the laird."

"Hold your tongue, Jess," said her mother, "there's more follies in your head than is good for you; lassies used to take up their spinning in the gloaming, but now there's no getting them even to wind a pirn. I would think shame of myself to be so lazy."

"Oh, mother," cried Jessie, "it's not the gloaming now, but dark night, and the kail is ready, and surely I have not been lazy this day."

"Well," replied Jean, "just take your own way. When the gude man says nothing, it's a thankless task for the wife to fash herself with."

Meanwhile old Elspeth had commenced her favourite theme, and her mind, far back in the days gone by, rambled on as she recounted to the children who listened with rapt attention, how the coming of many a one had been foretold in the manner Jean so steadfastly disbelieved; and even within her own recollection how her grandmother had predicted the arrival of one Angus McAlpine when he escaped from the black hounds of McDonald, and found a refuge in the glen.

"Aye," she said, "there's mair truth in these



things than young folk are willing to believe, and if they only wait long enough, they'll see for themselves."

The supper was at length placed on the table. Jean had thoughtfully set by a portion for her daughter, who would probably be both wet and cold when she arrived; the rest of the family had taken their places, and Duncan, bending forward, was about to ask a blessing on their frugal meal, when the door was hurriedly opened, and the figure of a tall Highlander stood before them. A sheaf of corn, thoroughly drenched, was under his arm, his plaid was disposed so as both to shelter and partly conceal the wearer, and no sooner had he stepped over the threshold than lightly throwing aside the folds of the tartan, the blushing Jeanie disclosed herself to her astonished parents.

"Eh, sirs!" exclaimed Jessie,—but that damsel, warned by a severe look from her mother that she had said enough, placed her hand over her mouth and remained silent, though the mirthful look which her tell-tale eyes revealed plainly told how much she enjoyed her sister's bashful confusion.

"Sandy McAlpine, lad, you're welcome," said Duncan, rising and grasping the visitor's hand. "It's a goodly sight to see you this way, and many thanks to you for fetching the lassie home, but, dearie me, you're just half drowned. Come near the fire, and take the big chair in the corner."

"McAlpine did you say?" cried old Elspeth, "and who's richt noo, eh? You will no gar me believe but there's truth in the grimes that hang fra' the kail-pot; and it's no the first time that ane o' the McAlpines has sought shelter in the glen, aye, and found it too, so just come ben, my bonnie lad, and sit you doon: you'll no be

ony the waur o' a loggie of *kail*; for indeed you're as cauld as a stane."

Sandy was soon made comfortable, and greatly pleased his new-found friends by relating amusing stories of his hunting experience, and the grand doings at the Tower, which were most welcome and interesting items of news to the dwellers in this secluded spot. When Jeanie emerged from behind the hallan, looking prettier than ever in the Sunday clothes, which she had exchanged for her wet working garments, Sandy seemed to have no eyes for any one but her, at least so thought sharp Miss Jessie, and so the evening passed pleasantly away. Perhaps Sandy thought it strange to conclude a merry evening with family worship, which was a duty Duncan never omitted, but when he stretched himself on the soft warm heather couch, which they had prepared for him, he must have felt that no evenings ever spent with boon companions at the clachan in the "Toon" could be recalled with so much heartfelt gladness. The character of old Duncan, whose earnest religion was simple and altogether devoid of fanaticism, opened to him a new chapter in the book of life.

Sandy, notwithstanding that his recent journey in Jeanie's company had not produced all he could have wished, was more than ever reconciled to biding his time, as he witnessed in his beloved a spirit which, though hitherto unknown to him, was indicative of a heart that might be trusted for ever.

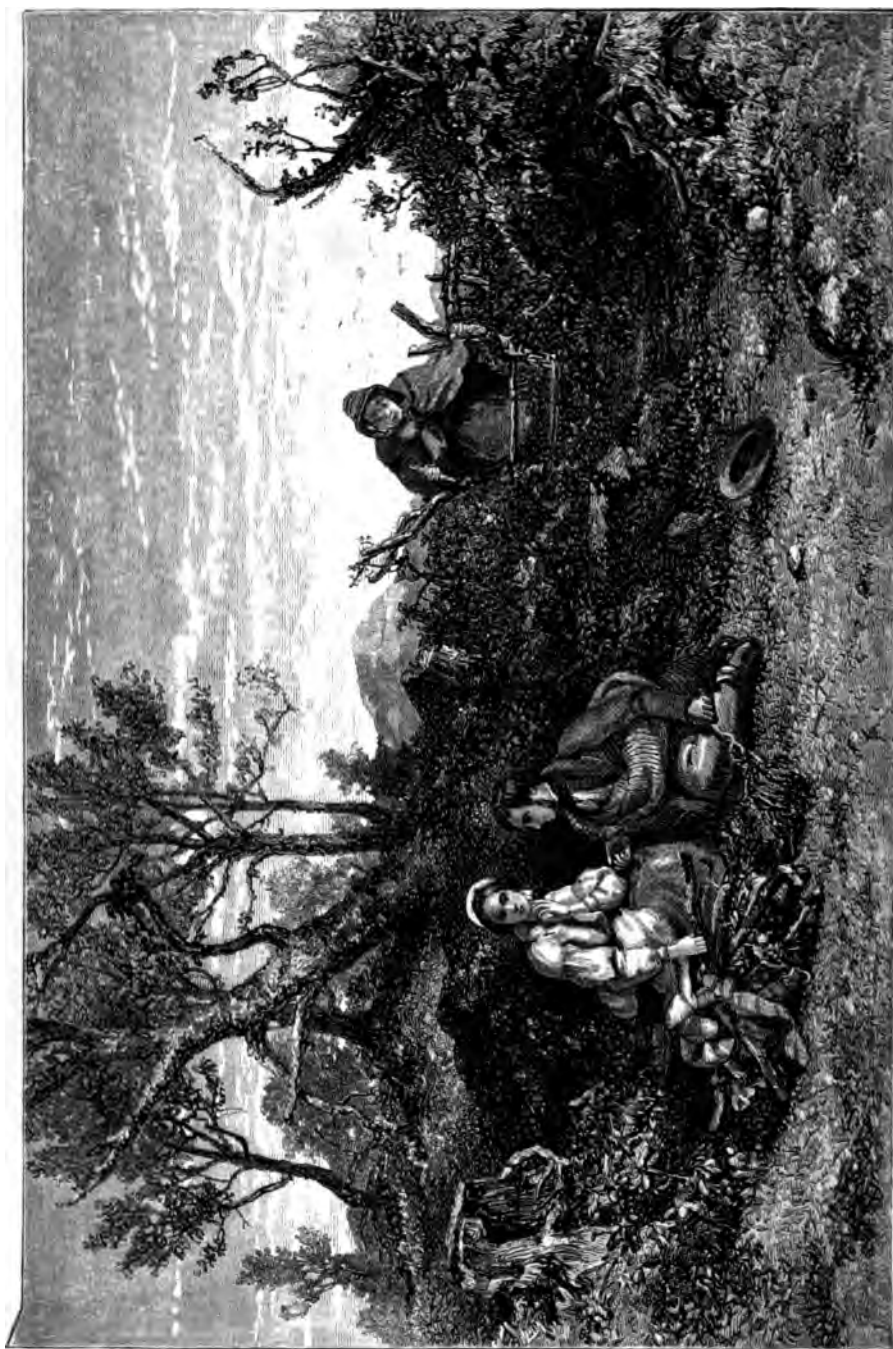
## CHAPTER XXVIII.

“ Amang the bonny winding banks,  
Where Doon rins whimplin’ clear,  
Where Bruce ance rul’d the martial ranks;  
And shook the Carrick spear,  
Some merry, friendly countra folks  
Together did convene,  
To burn their nits, and pou their stocks,  
And haud their Halloween,  
Fu’ blithe that night.

BURNS.

AFTER the incident related in the previous chapter Sandy became a frequent guest at the mill-house. It was also remembered that, when his services in the capacity of gillie were no longer required, and he resumed the occupation of shepherd, the laird’s sheep were very often seen on the hills overlooking Eldmuir. If the cold sea breezes were productive of better pastures on these exposed eminences, it was a fact only apparent to Sandy ; and his opinion in this respect was directly at variance with that of the farmers thereabouts, and possibly the sheep in their own judgment, if they formed any, might have found reason to murmur, but there they were brought, and consequently had to make the best of it. Sandy, if not quite satisfied with the wisdom of the proceeding, at least found ample excuse, and also ample consolation, in the frequent opportunities thus afforded him of visiting





JACOB THOMSON.

*THE COURSE OF TRUE LOVE NEVER DID RUN SMOOTH.*

W. W. BATHING.

the mill-house. It was astonishing how many ailments those sheep were afflicted with, and how often Duncan had to be consulted on the best methods of cure! The lovers, if such they were, which indeed no one doubted although they had as yet forborne to disclose the fact to each other, thus often met, and if their tongues were silent, their eyes were eloquent, and made amends for reticence. No one was so quick at noticing the signs of incipient affection as Jessie, and when we take into consideration her *vast* experience, we must acknowledge that she was very likely to be right in her conclusions.

Another couple also found means of procuring occasional interviews in a secluded dell between Eldmuir and the "Toon." Jamie and Jessie now thoroughly understood each other, but strangely enough the lassie would return from these meetings with her sweetheart in various and ever-changing moods. Sometimes she would return home as blythe as a lark, doing extravagant things in an excited and hysterical way. At another she would be morose and ill-tempered, hardly vouchsafing a word in civility, even to her father, of whom she was not a little afraid. Again, she would be melancholy and shed tears—in short, there was a continual change of sentiment with Jessie, clouds and sunshine rapidly succeeded each other, and resembled the fickle character of spring days in this varying climate of ours.

Emotions such as these are the common lot of all who, by forming a clandestine attachment, may be said to woo the fickle god of love "under difficulties," and Jamie and Jessie being thus engaged were paying the penalty. One thing appeared to Jamie almost in the light of a fatality, and this was that more than once, in fact, several times, old Elspeth had come suddenly upon them and disturbed their trysts, just at a time and place when her

presence could not possibly be looked for. Jamie had often endeavoured to gain the good-will of Duncan, but had not as yet succeeded. That the father was prejudiced must be admitted ; he really knew no ill of the lad, and no one could charge him with worse faults than being fond of amusement, of dancing, and of being changeable in his choice of a calling. It may have been that this latter characteristic, reminding Duncan of his own early career, his erratic conduct, and the sorrow it had occasioned during a long period to those he loved, disposed him to think of Jamie unfavourably. At all events the young carpenter had not yet sufficiently secured the favour of his father-in-law to justify his entering upon the subject of marriage with Jessie. Thus people often play at cross purposes, and all the while things are tending in the direction they desire. Sandy was more reserved than Jamie, and this peculiarity in him proceeded from an idea that girls' hearts may only be sought by such as are in a position to give them a comfortable home. It might not be cause of regret if this opinion prevailed more extensively at the present day, but such is not the case, and if Sandy had considered the subject in the light afforded by Jamie and Jessie's secret wooing, with the course of which he was well acquainted, possibly he might have seen fit to alter his opinion, and "swim with the stream." Sandy may, however, be pardoned for not comparing the prudent, noble-minded, and religious young woman who had won his heart with her light-hearted, frolicsome, and eminently thoughtless sister, whom he considered was little more than a child. So we must *een* let our cautious and reticent friend carry on his love-making in his own quiet way.

There was nothing startling or at all sensational in the course of the attachment of these two. It had commenced quietly, almost imperceptibly, and it proceeded

in the same even and undemonstrative manner. Sandy would drop in during the evening, and sit by the fire, speaking very little to Jeanie, but all the time following her with his eyes, as she pursued her various tasks, and at bed-time they would separate with a friendly "Gude nicht, Jeanie," and "Good night, Sandy;" but perhaps the pressure of hand in hand was more lingering and tender than would have characterized a mere friendly acquaintanceship. In other respects, however, Sandy was neither slow nor idle; he had been inquiring about a small farm likely to become vacant, and was making honourable exertions towards becoming its tenant when the opportunity should occur.

Fergus Campbell, Duncan's eldest son, was at Inverary. He resided with their old pastor and his sister, and attended at the grammar school, for Fergus aspired to become a minister of the Gospel. Jean was accustomed to receive a letter from her friends in Cumberland at Christmas or New Year, together with a present, which she acknowledged in an epistle expressing their thanks, and giving such news as she judged would interest the general and Lady Maud. But, unknown to the folks at Eldmuir, many letters passed between Lady H. and Mistress Barbara, by which the former was kept well informed concerning the fortunes and affairs of her Highland protégés. The expenses of schooling for the boys came from some place other than Eldmuir, and it was probable that if Fergus proved worthy of their kindness he would not, when the time for so doing arrived, lack friends to help him on in the calling he had chosen.

Towards the end of October Fergus came home on a visit, and was accompanied by Donald, who had returned from a voyage, and was expecting again to go out as boatswain of a fine vessel, the property of the merchants



who had hitherto befriended him. If Donald had ever indulged hopes of winning the heart of Jessie, he could now no longer entertain them. Her manner could not be misunderstood, even if a tell-tale had not already informed him of what was going on ; but fortunately there had never been such a liking between the young people as would lead to the supposition of their affections being mutually engaged.

The last day of October was the occasion of a festivity at the mill-house such as had not been seen there since the christening of little Maud, when the pastor and his sister, together with several other friends, had been present.

All Hallows, or Halloween, is dear to the memory of every Scotsman. He remembers, even to the most minute particular, all the circumstances of the merry, convivial meetings held, while he was yet a child, on this eventful day ; and the pastimes then in vogue, the incantations used, and the superstitious feelings evoked in the various observances of that time-honoured festival are never effaced from his mind.

Old Elspeth on this night was radiant with delight when she found herself the centre of an unusually large party, who listened with interest and awe to her animated recital of bygone reminiscences, and accorded to her the entire direction of the evening's proceedings. Dugald McAlpine and his three sons were present, as were also Alistair McCrae, with his daughter, and Donald. These, with the family at the mill-house, filled the keeping-room, which had once been a large apartment, but was now divided by the erection of a partition, called the "hal-lan," so as to accommodate an increasing family. The assembled party did justice to the homely supper, at which wheaten bread formed an unusual luxury ; and this called forth many warm compliments to Jeanie,

who had first gleaned the wheat, beaten it out, winnowed it, ground it in the quern, and ultimately made it into cakes with her own hand.

The quern, we may remind our readers, was a small hand-mill, formerly much used in remote districts of the Highlands. It was composed of two circular flat stones, one resting on the other, and the upper one turned by the hand, thus performing on a small scale the same task that the large mill-stones execute when revolving by the aid of water, wind, or steam. "Ca'ing" the quern was always the duty of women, and this article had come into operation at Eldmuir in order to supply meal to the family when the old mill got out of repair.

The night of Duncan's party was unusually stormy, and gave strength to the universally held opinion, that on this evening, "Halloween," the witches were wont to raise a hurricane, and, aided by the howling gusts of wind, fly over the country on broomsticks. Our friends drew their chairs, stools, and whatever else they could find to sit upon, round the clean-swept, jovial hearth; the old sheep-dog lay at full length before the cheery blaze, no doubt considering himself as much entitled as any one to be present, and pussy had brought her three kittens to occupy the chimney corner, and keep out of the way of Steenie, who considered them his legitimate playthings. Elspeth told such fearful stories of All Hallow's Eve as made her auditors' very flesh creep, and Alister was not less entertaining in the recounting of romances and legendary lore.

Who is there that has once been present at such a party who cannot look back and recall to memory pleasant thoughts of such times as these? A stormy night, a blazing fire, a circle of friends, and plenty of well-told ghost stories form an era in youth's history

which old age does not forget. The memory of these bygone scenes and times lingers fondly in our minds, even while the painful remembrance comes over us that many of the dear friends then with us have since fallen by the way, and gone forth into the silent land to which we too are surely journeying.

"Are you no ganging to try stocks the nicht?" said Elspeth; "lads and lasses used to be fond o' that game in ma young days."

"You can pull your stocks and roast your nuts," said Duncan, "but we'll have none of them uncanny spells that are just unseemly for Christian bodies to meddle with."

"Na, na," exclaimed Elspeth, "dinna be tempting fate, bairns; there's mony a Halloween cantrip that was dune lang syne, but is better forgotten noo."

"Who'll go with me to pull a stock?" cried Jessie, laughing.

Donald offered his hand, but the damsel drew back. "No Donald, not with you," she said seriously, and went out with young Roderick McAlpine. Donald followed with Elsie, then Jeanie and Sandy, and lastly, Maud and Evan. Fergus stayed within; the young lad was of a serious and very sober turn of mind, and he did not consider such superstitious observances in keeping with his destined calling. The seekers were soon in the kail-yard, where each one, holding a partner's hand and with close shut eyes, was to pull the first stock of kail they came to. These being brought in and examined, were supposed to determine by shape and other characteristics similar features in the husband or wife that was to fall to the gatherer's lot. Jessie was the first to return, bearing a thin, crooked stem, which old Elspeth pronounced to be a "pure feckless callant," and as no earth adhered to

the root, he would be lacking in gear or worldly wealth. Poor Jessie in her heart acknowledged that either her luck or her grandmother's solution of it was not very wide of the mark, so she placed her runt (as it is called) above the door. Jeanie and Sandy were very fortunate, each had pulled a well-shaped stalk of kail, and each bore a considerable amount of earth about the roots, intimating that the bride would possess a good tocher, or portion, and the bridegroom be well-to-do. Elsie drew a very crooked one, which produced peals of laughter, and each of the others was more or less successful in form or characteristic of their "pulls."

"Dugald man," cried Alister, "come away and let us old ones try our fortune. The young folks mustn't have it all to themselves, and for myself I'd as soon go to my own wedding as any other body's."

Accompanied by the children to see they pulled fair, out went the old men, with as much merriment in their hearts as they might have had fifty years ago, when under more hopeful auspices they probably enjoyed a similar pastime. "A broken ane, and no but ane for the twa o' them," cried Allan, dancing into the house, and if they could have laughed more than they had already done, they did so now, as the two fortune triers returned disputing the possession of one head of kail, which they had both got hold of unwittingly, and broken between them.

Jean now produced a bag of nuts for roasting, this being one of the most favourite amusements of All Hallow's Eve, and one whose prognostications are yet in some districts implicitly believed in. This trial of fortune is made by two nuts, the one named after some girl, and the other after a youth, being laid side by side in the fire. They are watched while burning; and should

they burn quietly away together, the pair whose names they bear may be expected to have a prosperous courtship and a happy marriage; while should one crack or fly off, or the two burn unevenly, dire results to future union are foretold.

"Gie me twa o' them nits," said Elspeth, "and I'll just put them in wi' the names o' the bonniest lassie and the maist hopefu' lad I ken. This one is Jessie, an' this Donald." She placed the nuts side by side in a hot glowing crevice between the peats.

"I'll not stop," cried Jessie.

"You might do waur, ye silly thing," replied the grandmother. But Jessie did not stop—puff, bang—and away went her nut over all their shoulders, as if seeking a partner elsewhere.

"I'm off to find my joe" (lover), said Jessie; "just as I told you, but now I'll put in two myself, and the names nobody shall know, so we'll see how they come on."

Jessie's pair of nuts simmered away quietly enough for a short time, then one suddenly cracked, and starting up about a foot fell down again beside the other.

"That's no lucky," said Elspeth solemnly, "there'll be a bind and then a break—'deed, Jess, ye'd best no speer ony mair."

Jessie withdrew from the circle, and all the rest pressed eagerly forward to partake in the fun.

How the nuts did fly, to be sure! Now they would burn so peacefully that expectation became next to dead certainty; then, suddenly, one would start away and upset all their calculations! One of Donald's nuts flew off into Elsie's lap, and this incident he long afterwards remembered.

Puss and her family, whose comfort was thus interfered with, withdrew from the chimney corner; the sheep-

dog, after having more than once felt the effect of a hot nut on his back, abandoned his position in disgust; but still the trial of luck went on, and with increased hilarity on all sides, and when, at last, the party grew tired of the burning, Elspeth volunteered another story.

The knot of listeners had all gathered around her, and with bated breath and many a glance over their shoulders into the darkness behind, were nerved to a pitch of intense excitement, when suddenly a piercing shriek was heard without, and, the door being thrown violently open, Jessie rushed in, pale as death, and fell almost fainting into their midst.

"She's been flaten hersell wi' some uncanny spells oot by," said Elspeth, endeavouring to soothe the terrified girl, who sobbed as if her heart was breaking; but if they had any superstitious fears regarding Jessie's nocturnal and ghostly visitors, they were soon allayed by the appearance at the door of Jamie Cummings, the cause of whose unexpected visit was soon made known. He had, he said, come expressly to call Dugald McAlpine, who was wanted immediately by the laird; but he forgot to add that he had intercepted a little boy coming over with that message, and had bribed him to let him deliver it instead. Jessie, it turned out, had been trying another popular divination peculiar to Halloween. Stealing out, she had determined on trying her fortune by fathoming a stack, in the firm belief that if she went three times round the stack, measuring it with extended arms, she would on completing the circuit the third time, and while spreading her arms to perform the final act of measuring, enclose in her embrace the form of her destined husband. She had stolen out unperceived, and in disobedience to her father's expressed commands, just after Elspeth commenced her story, and,


with feelings wrought up to the highest pitch of excitement, had nearly performed the conditions of the spell, when Jamie, coming up and perceiving her intention, had placed himself so as to be caught at the proper moment.

Jessie's alarm may be easily imagined when, in spite of her continually repeating the fixed formula of "There's nothing will come," "There's nothing will come," she was at the critical moment enclosed with a pair of sturdy arms, and felt a kiss imprinted on her lips. When the explanation of the screams had been given, Jessie became subject for the mirth of the party; but her father, regarding her with a severe expression, said,—

"You would have been right served, lass, if the fright you got had been more than it was. Did I not forbid any of you to try these cantrips, which are nothing less than just tempting Providence and giving place to the evil one?"

Jessie's tears, which flowed freely after this rebuke, appeared to Duncan to evidence repentance; but, in spite of all, Jessie was not a little elated at the success of her adventure. Though Jamie was not a favourite with Duncan, he was invited to sit down and partake of a glass of whiskey with them ere he accompanied Dugald back to the Toon—an introduction somewhat equivocal, though it might surely lead him to hope for better opportunities of improving his acquaintance with the family. He had Dugald on his side, at any rate, and although Sandy did not altogether approve of Jamie's wild ways, he was friendly to the young man, and disposed, if possible, to assist him in his suit.

The merry party now broke up, as the laird's summons necessitated Dugald's return, and his sons accompanied him home. The laird, it seemed, often sent for Dugald



at "uncanny" times of the night; for deep drinking and late hours had become the rule, instead of the exception, as they once were, at the Tower, and plans for the morrow, suggested at the conclusion of their festivities, had to be made known to him that they might be carried out.

On retiring to rest that night, Jessie inquired of Jeanie whose "runt" was first placed above the door; for it was a belief that the first stranger entering the door after the "runs," or kail stocks, are put over it will be the bride or bridegroom of the person owning the one there first placed.

"Wasn't it your own, Jessie?" inquired Jeanie.

"Of course it was," answered Jessie, "and wasn't Jamie the first stranger who came in the night?"

Jeanie smiled at her sister's eagerness to "catch at straws," as she called it, and replied,—

"Say your prayers, Jessie, and trust more to God's aid and blessing in such matters than foolish Halloween spells."

"I'm sure I always do that," said Jessie, laying herself down beside her sister; "nevertheless," she added in a low voice, "my runt *was* first put up, and my Jamie *was* first to come in, and Jamie caught me just as he ought to have done when I fathomed the stack, did he not?"

"Go to sleep, Jessie!"

Jessie, in her sweet sleep of girlish innocence and light-heartedness, had many dreams, but amid all her shadowed hopes, wherein Jamie figured so prominently, that omen of the break foretold by Elspeth never entered; she had no presentiments of sorrowful realities; no visions of sickness, poverty, and disappointment; nothing of stern fact which so frequently comes to banish the very memory of imaginary pictures—nothing of all these as yet—Jessie only dreamed of love and Jamie.



## CHAPTER XXIX.

“ O happy love ! where love like this is found !  
O heartfelt raptures ! bliss beyond compare !  
I've paced much this weary, *mortal round*,  
And large *Experience* bids me this declare—  
'If heaven a draught of heavenly pleasure spare,  
One cordial in this melancholy vale,  
'Tis when a youthful, loving, modest pair,  
In other's arms, breathe out the tender tale,' ”  
BURNS.

JAMIE and Jessie's course of love ran smoothly on through the winter, and the young man's conduct was beyond reproach. He pursued his work steadily and persistently, his old desultory habits were apparently overcome, and his fondness for the rustic sports of the village youth gave place to the enjoyment of his new-found happiness. As for Sandy and Jeanie they kept on in the old way, loving each other, doubtless, with deep and earnest affection, and while one was quite as conscious of it as the other, both with a timidity or shyness, often accompanying the truest and most enduring affection, forebore to speak of what was nearest their hearts. Jessie would sometimes rally her quiet sister on the possession of a lover who was either afraid of her, or too cautious to commit himself. But this latter accusation always incensed Jeanie, and provoked many a retort in Sandy's

cause which she would not have employed in her own defence.

"Indeed I would not have such a lad as yours," said Jessie one day, when, fresh from a meeting with Jamie, she found her sister moody and downcast. "Sure enough I'd give him the slip some road or other."

"What ails you, Jessie?" replied Jeanie. "If I'm contented, why should you make such a fuss about it. I'm sure the lad's welcome just to do as he pleases."

"Oh! aye! just so! no doubt!" murmured Jessie; "but any way Sandy loves you, Jeanie."

"I don't know," sighed, rather than spoke, the elder sister.

"You don't know?" exclaimed Jessie, with raised voice and heightened colour, "everybody knows—and you most of all, if you would but speak the truth, and you love him—that's another thing, certain."

"Aye! may be that's more than you know yourself," said Jeanie quietly.

"No, it isn't," answered Jessie abruptly, "do you think no one has eyes but yourself, lassie? What brings the callant here night after night, sitting in the ingle neuk doing nothing but watch you? And why should you be so particular about dainty things for Sandy's supper, if you did not think more of him than anybody else, eh? You are a queer pair, I must say, and if Jamie served *me* so, I'd sort him, that I would!"

"And what did Jamie say—when—well—just at first, you know—did he *say* he loved you?" inquired Jeanie, with a little curiosity.

"To be sure he did," replied Jessie, "and gave me a kiss, and—"

"Oh, Jessie, did you let the lad kiss you?" asked Jeanie, in astonishment.

“What for no?” said Jessie demurely. “Who has a better right, I’d like to know?”

“And I suppose he’ll have done it pretty often since then?” inquired Jeanie.

“May be, once or twice he has,” answered Jessie; but if she had said one or two hundred times it would not have been any further from the truth; and the thought caused the young girl to pout a little, and blush amazingly.

“Well!” said Jeanie, sighing, “everybody’s not alike, I suppose, and if I do love Sandy—for it seems to be no use denying it to you, who see all and know all—I don’t think any the worse of the lad for being so backward, and till he does speak what can I do but let him know I am not misliking him?”

“Oh, you’ll make up for it, likely, after you are wedded,” said Jessie, “but if you don’t mind, I’ll see that day before you.”

“Jessie!” cried Jeanie, “and you but just turned eighteen, and talking about marriage! Dear, but you are in a great hurry, and I must say—”

What Jeanie intended to say never reached the ears of Jessie, who, perceiving that one of those lectures of which she had a great dread was impending, hastened to make her escape.

Jamie at last mustered up sufficient courage to venture on the subject of his love for Jessie with her father, who received the communication with much astonishment. Let alone the prejudice which he had conceived against the young carpenter, Jessie was far too young as yet to think of such a thing as marriage, and Duncan having set forth this objection in strong terms, proceeded to say—“You see, lad, this carpentering business is not exactly like being settled in life, you are here to-day, and

away to-morrow, and when out of work at one place you might have miles to go ere you met with another job. Then, you see, the lassie is but a feckless body yet, and hardly fitted to guide any man's gear in a wise-like, prudent manner, without which, things would soon go to rack and ruin." After a short pause, he continued, "I would not say precisely that, supposing things were different, you might not think of the lassie, but just wait a wee. Let her grow older, and you yourself get hold of a small established trade that will not be flying away from you, and then—well, just take an old man's advice, who does not wish you any ill, and wait awhile."

With this half-reluctant, and yet not altogether withheld, consent, Jamie was obliged to rest satisfied, but from this time the converse between the lovers was conducted in a more open and undisguised manner. In fact Jamie was considered, by all those who had nothing whatever to do with it, as an accepted suitor, and with Jessie's aid, no doubt, managed to sustain the rôle to perfection.

That night, after Jamie's departure, Duncan said to his wife, "I don't know, but I doubt I have not done exactly right in giving the lad so much encouragement, but, dearie me, I could not help it—he pled so warmly like, and seemed to be so smitten with the bairn, that you see, Jean, I just minded what's bygone with ourselves, and did not deny him."

Jean was, however, out of temper with Jessie, and received her husband's explanations with an ill grace. She was disappointed that things had come to this pass between persons she was not much interested in. In her own mind, Jessie had no right even to expect such a thing as being settled in life before her elder sister, and on this point she expressed herself pretty plainly. "The bold thing"—so she called her second daughter—"she

thinks herself vastly clever, no doubt, and I hope she will not rue her bargain ; but, oh ! if Sandy would but speak out like that of Jeanie, how much pleasure there would be in giving our consent ! ”

“ All in good time, wife, all in good time,” said Duncan.

As the year wore on, and the return of the sporting season caused much of Sandy’s time to be occupied in attendance on the laird and his friends, the intercourse between him and Jeanie was lessened, and then there were not wanting many to say that the young man was “ cooling off,” whatever that meant ; that “ they had always expected it,” which, of course, was a fiction ; and “ that Sandy knew on which side his bread was buttered,” a remark entirely uncalled for and in his case quite inapplicable. These reports and sayings, together with many similar ones, emanated from the cottage of a buxom widow, whose blooming daughter had tried her best, but without success, to entice Sandy, and had been heard to say “ she was a victim to misplaced confidence, and was very glad he had never asked her, as there seemed to be nothing reliable about anything.”

Jeanie said very little, but, whatever her thoughts were, they revealed neither fear nor apprehension. Perhaps she possessed a clue to Sandy’s reticence, only known to herself, or perhaps she was sustained by higher and more strengthening hopes than can ever be conceived by those who make the trivial affairs of life the end and aim of their existence. She noticed with undisguised pleasure that Sandy became a constant attendant at the kirk, and that he listened reverently and with apparent interest to the minister’s lengthy discourses. Moreover, the minister had said to her father, in her own hearing, that Sandy was becoming much changed for the

better, that he seemed to have got rid of his former thoughtless habits, and was now regular and earnest in his studies of the Scriptures. Both father and daughter listened to this account of one who was always foremost in their thoughts with unfeigned delight. Both rejoiced in their own way, and in secret Duncan's thoughts were as much of worldly prosperity as was compatible with his strict religious character. Though relying with child-like faith and confidence on a kind and beneficent Providence, he believed in the widely-accepted truth that "God helps those who help themselves," and saw in Sandy an evident disposition so to do. Jeanie's thoughts were of brighter things, not so real nor so tangible as her father's, but equally to be esteemed for their power of conferring enduring happiness. She thought how beautiful all things looked around them, and how they seemed to be irradiated by the presence of a love that could only be felt by grateful hearts; she thought how useful and how beautiful is that life which is shared by two "who are agreed," and who, in uniting their souls in the love of each other, are thus made one, not only for time, but for eternity. To such, death could only be a short interruption, not an everlasting separation.

The young maiden had a feeling that Sandy's religious tendencies had something to do with herself, and were brought about by his love for her, and she rejoiced that by her means Sandy was changed from what he had been.

When another Halloween approached, it was intended the festival should be celebrated by a banquet to the tenants of the estate at the laird's "Tower." Energetic and somewhat impulsive in character, the laird began to imagine (perhaps correctly) that the wonted hospitality of the tower towards the middle and lower classes of his retainers had been much neglected during his repeated

and long absences in London, and he determined to make amends, and to make this an occasion on which all, whether rich or poor, who in any way possessed a claim upon him should, as was customary during his father's time, partake of the good cheer in his ancestral hall.

"I have spent many hundred pounds foolishly enough," he often said, "on those who, if I were starving to-morrow, would never cast a look towards me, while the brave-hearted ones, whose forbears went with my ancestors to battle, and stood by the old house in times of trouble and danger, and who would themselves now shed their blood for me, are neglected and rarely welcomed as they ought to be."

The factor, Mr. Kinnaird, was a worthy, good man, and it rejoiced his heart to find that so much of the true Highland chieftain's disposition yet remained in his master's mind, and he resolved that no effort should be spared to give *éclat* to the laird's hospitality. Preparations for the festive gathering were being made during some weeks previous to the appointed day, and the subject formed a topic for discussion amongst the nightly frequenters of the clachan, or ale-house, in the "Toon." The worthies who met there to smoke their pipes, drink whisky, and talk politics, belonged to a class still frequently met with. They were mostly small farmers and tradesmen, who considered themselves very enlightened in their ideas, and who commented on the doings of Parliament, and on the Prime Minister himself, with as much assumption of knowledge as though they were prescribing drenches and washes for a sick bullock on their farms. Professing to be well acquainted with the circumstances of the laird of Loch Awe, they predicted that the purposed display of hospitality was the last struggle of a failing cause. Some even went so far

as to charge the laird with following the Bible precept of "making friends of the mammon of unrighteousness" in case of ultimate failure; but, notwithstanding many ill-natured remarks of a similar nature, public opinion was generally on the side of their respected landlord.

Early in the afternoon of the Eve of All Hallows, the green in front of the "Tower" was crowded with youth of both sexes engaged in merry pastimes. The old people gathered apart; and, some standing and others seated on fragments of grey rock that peeped up here and there from among the grass, talked of old times and long past scenes when they had taken part in such pleasant festivals as the one which had now called them together. They spoke of the games at which they had been present long ago, and contrasted them with those they were now assembled to witness; they related incidents of the dances in which they had joined when young, and recounted how this one's wedding had resulted from some merry-making, or another's engagement had been broken off; and remarked how much the lads and lasses had altered from what they had been in their early days. Indeed, everything that interested them was of "Auld Lang Syne!"

The laird had offered prizes for successful competitors in various trials of strength and skill, and these formed the chief holiday amusements of the people. Among other trials a wonderfully heavy stone was to be "*put*" on another, and this Sandy effected amid resounding applause; next a fir-tree called "The Caber," was to be tossed by lusty stalwart youths, and the prize for being unequalled at this feat was awarded to a young shepherd from a neighbouring glen; then there were quoits and golf, in the playing of which legs were at a discount, and shins greatly suffered; then there was shooting at a mark,



at which Sandy was not excelled, and a race to the mountains, in which he distanced all his opponents. During the continuance of the sports four deep-chested and long-winded pipers blew with might and main; their music, wild and warlike in its character, which, re-echoing from crag to crag and sounding far down the valley, reached the wooded islets of Loch Craignish, where the water-fowl standing in deep contemplation by some quiet shady pool heard it, and flew away in fear and consternation. Then again the music changed, the soul-stirring strains that had cheered the kilted sons of McLeod to battle, died away into a mournful lament for the wounded or dirge for the slain, and then struck up again with such a lively and merry measure that the feet of the old woman on crutches involuntarily essayed to join in the dance, while lads and lasses lost themselves in the whirl and excitement of the reels, and grey-haired men and women mingling with their grandchildren in the happy confusion prolonged the sport, and added to the merriment. At sunset, Dugald MacAlpine, the self-elected master of the ceremonies, blew a wild, discordant blast on the conch-shell to announce the welcome fact that supper was prepared.

The banquet, for any other term would be quite unworthy of the feast, was served in the long hall at the mansion. The narrow lancet windows afforded but little light so late in the day, and therefore flaring pine torches were fixed at intervals against the walls, and threw a ruddy glare over the hospitable board. Deers' heads and antlers, with breast-plates and targets, crossed claymores, pikes, axes, and other weapons, concealed the rough stonework of the walls. A mighty log-fire blazed in the capacious chimney, and grim-looking deer-hounds, with collies and terriers, disputed for places near it, and

sniffed at the powerful odour of the viands with watering mouths.

Duncan and his family were amongst the guests, and it may be affirmed that Jeanie had not been an uninterested spectator of Sandy's successes in the sports of the afternoon, and she had not withheld her hand when he sought her as his partner in the dance.

Busy tongues had not been idle in making remarks on the handsome pair, whose business seemed to be so much the common property of every one else that not a vestige of it remained at their own disposal. Jessie had obtained leave from her mother to go over to the "Tower" early in the morning, for Mrs. Crane, the housekeeper, she said, had asked her to assist in the weighty preparations she had to make for the reception of so many visitors.

So the young maiden, having made up her best clothes in a bundle, intending to don them after her labours were over, departed in her every-day garments, but for all that she was not seen at the "Tower," either by Mrs. Crane or any one else, until just before the hour of sunset. This was not known to her father or mother, neither of whom had ever doubted her word, nor thought of inquiring from the busy housekeeper whether she had been with her or not.

At the supper the laird himself occupied the head of the table, and on him all eyes were turned with gratitude and reverence. His toasts were received with loud applause, and drank unanimously in strong ale and usquebaugh, and the oldest vassals averred there had never been, even in the old laird's time, or in that of his fathers before him, so noble a festival as this. When all had done justice to the good cheer so liberally provided, the hall was cleared, and the pipers being placed on a raised platform near one end of the apartment, the laird

himself, who had selected Jessie as his partner, led off the dance, and by this act the chieftain was supposed to accord to her the credit of being the handsomest girl present.

To the sedate frequenters of our modern ball-rooms the faithful chronicle of a Highland dance in days gone by would doubtless be productive of much amusement. Three reels, and double four reels, used to call forth the utmost efforts of those engaged in their performance, and their fantastic evolutions, wherein many a lad and lassie, not always accidentally, ran against each other, evoked peals of mirthful laughter. Strathspeys, jigs, and the well-known Highland hornpipe, were dances in which the emulous swains displayed their agile powers to the most advantage, and the skilful performance of the sword dance was considered so highly meritorious that many a pretty girl lost her heart while beholding the graceful attitudes of some handsome celt, as his silver buckles flashed among the glittering blades of the claymores.

After watching the merry company for some time, and even joining in a country dance themselves, Duncan and Jean, with Alister, his daughter, and the younger branches of their own family, departed for home, leaving Jeanie and Jessie to further enjoy themselves, but with strict injunctions for their return before midnight.

There is no knowing when these lithesome feet would have grown weary, or how long the festive dance might have been kept up, had not the stoppage of the music brought the entertainment to an abrupt conclusion. Three pipers were already *hors de combat*—"they had fairly blown themselves oot," they said, and when the fourth, who had held out a little longer, sustained by a horn of whisky, at last became repentant and melancholy, suddenly changing the lively strathspey tune into "Mack-

rimmon's Lament," it was found impossible to proceed. With hearty good feeling, and many a "gude nicht," the jovial party broke up, and Sandy prepared to accompany Jeanie and her sister home.

"Come, Jessie," said Jeanie, when she had discovered that young girl in a corner consulting gravely with her attendant Jamie. "Come, Jessie, lass," she cried a second time, her first summons having been unattended to, "are you not thinking of going home? it's later than father gave us leave to stop, you know."

"Indeed, Jeanie," replied Jessie, "you can go home when you please, but you must not expect me to go with you."

"Why not?" inquired Jeanie.

"Just because I'm going to my own home with my own husband—that's what for," said Jessie. "Jamie and me were wedded this morning, you must know, Jeanie, dearie."

"Good guide us, you do not say so!" stammered Jeanie, "and what—and what must I say to father, then?"

"Oh, just tell him the truth," replied Jessie. "What's done cannot be undone—but Jeanie," she added, pleadingly, "you can just speak a good word for us, can you not?"

Jeanie was too astonished to reply, but seeing that her sister had spoken the truth, that she was now her own mistress, and that nothing more could be said or done that night, she left her, promising to do her best to smooth over the difficulty with their parents, and thankfully accepted Sandy's escort home.

The moon was shining brightly as they tripped pleasantly over the heath-clad fells. It was such a night as one might imagine the fairies would be abroad in. A

night for lovers to meet and exchange their vows, a night wherein the contemplative mind finds subject for deep and earnest thought, perceiving in the tranquillity of the star-gemmed sky a glimpse of rest, and that eternal peace which remains when all else has passed away. The shrill cry of the curlew came from afar over the moorlands, a gentle wind stirred the brown tops of the bracken as it passed along, but nothing else broke the stillness of the night. Jessie's conduct, which for some time these two lovers discussed on their way, naturally suggested a topic long fondly hidden in both their hearts, but which had not before found utterance.

So there in that lovely scene (and what place or hour could ever have been found better fitted for such a purpose?) Sandy told to Jeanie the old, old story, which has been told so often, but which is ever new in the telling, and it fell like dew on her own loving and responsive heart. If the moon could speak and tell of all the love-trysts she had witnessed, surely she could never relate any wherein there was more real affection, purity, and confidence, than in this. The arms of the young Highlander were folded round the slender form of the girl, who rested her head upon his bosom, and looked up half inquiringly, but wholly trustfully, into his eyes, and when he whispered, "Jeanie, my ain dearie, say can ye love me," she, not refusing the kiss that so affectionately accompanied his words, softly replied, "Sandy, I have loved you ever so long."

## CHAPTER XXX.

“Gie me ae spark o’ nature’s fire,  
That’s a’ the learning I desire,  
Then tho’ I drudge thro’ dub and mire,  
At plough or cart,  
My muse, tho’ hamely in attire,  
May touch the heart.”

BURNS.

It was a difficult and unwelcome task for the lovers when they arrived at the mill-house, to relate all that had taken place, and that was as yet unknown to their parents. First the story of Jessie’s wedding had to be communicated, and it was received by Duncan and his wife in silence, and with troubled faces; they were taken by surprise, and too angry for any immediate expression of their thoughts. Old Alister, however, who had not yet left their roof, burst into roars of laughter as he said, ‘Ha! ha! ha! well done, Jessie! Gude sake, but it’s like her—the bonny witch. Ha! ha! ha! just like her, so it is—making the laird’s grand dance serve for her own wedding party. Ha! ha! well done, Jessie, who ever heard the like? Gude man, don’t be hard with Jessie; just let well alone, or ill either, you cannot mend it now. It’s capital—grand—and here’s to the bonny bride. May her wedded life be just like a long summer’s day, and my best wishes attend her.’ Saying which he

drained his horn of whisky to the healths of the young and somewhat imprudent pair.

Alister's mirth was contagious, and not one of his hearers could help laughing at the affair when it was presented in this aspect, but it soon became evident that the parents were deeply wounded, and regarded this breach of decorum, as well as the secrecy of the proceeding and the deceit practised upon themselves, with serious displeasure. Old Alister, however, was in the mood to be pleased with Jessie, and pleaded so hard for her and Jamie, that when they had talked it over for a while Duncan seemed disposed to view it philosophically, and as Jessie's truism "that what was done could not be undone" was an indisputable fact, and as, although she had acted deceitfully, her father had never decidedly forbidden her marriage, they at last concluded that nothing remained but to make the best of it. When Alister had taken his leave, Sandy, with much natural diffidence and not without apprehension, addressed Duncan on the subject nearest to his own heart. He felt that the lateness of the hour warned him that his absence might be desirable, that the time was not propitious for speaking of his own affairs, or rather of his and Jeanie's, but he was so deeply in love, and within the last two hours had grown so full of hope, that it was impossible for him to go away with his fate undecided. If he had only known how much the two old people loved him, and how long they had desired his union with Jeanie, he might have been bolder, but being ignorant of all this, he was very nervous, and filled with trepidation as he began to speak. His diffidence, however, wore off as he proceeded; and when he saw the eyes of Jean light up with happiness and a tear ready to fall from the lids, and when she clasped her hands together and looked at him so kindly,

and Duncan rose up, grasping his hand, and saying, "My blessing on you, lad—on you both—it's been my heart's desire for many a day," Sandy, overcome by his intense and long pent up feelings, utterly broke down. By-and-by Jeanie emerged from behind the hallan, blushing and confused, for she had heard everything that had been said, and her father, pushing her towards Sandy, said, "Take her, laddie, and welcome." Then the laddie so addressed did take her to his heart, and in doing so, wondered where his eyes had been all this time, why all things so suddenly brightened up, and how clearly and self-evident many things of the past became; but the most wonderful of all was to find Jeanie sobbing with joy in his arms, and the parents looking on with delighted approbation.

The clock at this moment struck twelve as peremptorily as though it thought the people needed an extra reminder, but no one heeded its warning, and it went on spitefully ticking the seconds and telling off the minutes that intervened between twelve and one, still totally unregarded by them all. When at length "one," with its solemn, solitary, and melancholy sound, in the quiet night had also struck, and still no heed paid to its voice, the old clock which had measured time and counted the passing hours for many bygone generations of the self-same family, would seem to have for ever stopped and given up the idea of receiving attention as hopeless.

The moon had long gone down when Sandy crossed the fells, but what did he care? There was brightness enough in his heart to render the services of such a trifle as the moon perfectly useless, and when he roused his father to tell him the news, and the old man, who had not yet slept off the effects of his recent unwonted festivity, turned over and went to sleep again, murmuring that



there was "naething to mak sec a fash aboot," Sandy decided that he could scarcely be sober, and so himself went off to sleep.

Early the following morning Duncan made his way over to the "Toon," to pay a visit which now urgently devolved upon him, to the newly married couple. What transpired on that occasion we have no means of ascertaining, but as the father entered their cottage with a frown upon his brow, and after remaining within for a considerable time emerged at length with his face decked in smiles, and appearing as happy as possible, we may conclude that after duly admonishing them on the sinfulness and impropriety of their conduct, quoting an infinity of proverbs in support of his arguments, and having made them both as uncomfortable as could be, ended by freely forgiving them and conferring upon them his blessing; and this was just what he had wisely and properly done.

His next visit was to Dugald MacAlpine, who being somewhat misty and confused, and possessing a very dim and uncertain idea of what had transpired during the previous evening, required waking up; and this could only be brought about by the aid of a glass of whisky. Dugald listened most complacently to all that Duncan advanced; gave his unqualified assent to the union of his son with Jeanie; counted up a few sheep which he possessed that he intended should be a present to them when settled; and finally brightened up sufficiently to remember that a small farm would be vacant in a year from that time, and he had no doubt that Mister Kinnaird would ensure its occupation to Sandy.

"Let alone," he added, "the laird himself would nae doot dee something, but he could not say precisely how

far that gentleman might be prepared to gang, as things had gane ajee wi' him o' late."

Duncan returned home with a light heart, his fondest expectations fully realized with regard to Jeanie, and Jessie's case admitting of much that was hopeful and gladdening. Jean's fears "lest things might go crooked" were soon allayed when Duncan told her all he had done and said that morning, and when he assured her that all was now in proper train, she renewed her cheerfulness, and experienced a great relief.

There remained now nothing more for this happy couple to do than to see that Jeanie and her lover were not too hasty in *their* proceedings. But of this Jean said she had no fear, for a more prudent, modest girl than her daughter Jeanie was not anywhere to be found.

She then explained the whole matter to her mother, old Elspeth, who, although growing deaf and somewhat obtuse, was still remarkable for her retentive memory. She answered in a whisper, "Did I no foretell the lad's coming? And did no the grime on the kail-pot speak the truth?" Jean assured her that such was the case, and that the circumstance would not be forgotten, whereupon the old woman became ecstatically happy, and chuckled to herself as she thought it over during the whole of the day.

## CHAPTER XXXI.

“ Shall we too bend the stubborn head,  
In freedom’s temple born,  
Dress our pale cheek in timid smile,  
To hail a master in our isle,  
Or brook a victor’s scorn ? ”

SIR WALTER SCOTT.

THE excitement in the village, and amongst the family at Eldmuir, caused by Jessie’s unexpected wedding speedily subsided, being eclipsed by the more important subject of Sandy’s and Jeanie’s engagement. Jessie being now settled, there was no excuse for meddling or further interference. But with regard to her sister the busy-bodies discovered an uncertainty, and a possibility of marring, or disorganizing, the plans of the young couple, which furnished an employment very congenial to their tastes. Therefore while Jessie’s case was dismissed as affording no longer any matter for speculation, or occasion for mischief, Jeanie’s name was brought prominently forward, and her affairs became common property. It was considered that she required watching and advising, while Sandy’s conduct was placed under strict surveillance, and the gossips would have been only too glad could a fault or a flaw in either of their proceedings have been detected. Fortunately for the lovers their behaviour was such as to raise them in every well-meaning

person's estimation, and their intercourse, now fully sanctioned by the parent's approbation, was irreproachable.

Sandy's visits to Eldmuir were not now such stereotyped affairs as at one time they had been, and many new and pleasing subjects were infused into the conversation during their evening reunions. Indeed so much did Sandy now find to talk about, that it became evident his previous taciturnity had proceeded from bashfulness, and not because he was naturally wanting in intelligence. Jeanie also no longer seated herself opposite to him, but their new relations warranting more familiarity, they contrived to make the sunkie, which usually supported the milk pails, serve as a seat for both. Then again their partings were no longer confined to formal "good nights," but the affianced pair now wandered beyond the threshold and out into the moonlight, starlight, or no light—it mattered not which—and when returning indoors Jeanie's handsome face was always radiant with smiles.

When, after considerable explanation, old Elspeth was put in possession of all the particulars of the various occurrences, she used to say she'd "uphaud Sandy," which, in Highland phraseology, meant far more than the words expressed. Another cogent reason for her liking him was that he was a MacAlpine, for in bygone times there had been an alliance between her own family, the MacGregors, and the MacAlpines, that had ended well; and once on this theme Elspeth would ramble on, recalling matter about the rebellion, the clan disturbances, the MacLeods, the MacGregors, the MacAlpines, and other people and things, until she became mystified and uncertain as to names and dates, but despite these wanderings she always concluded by saying she'd "uphaud Sandy!"

The young man's exertions to gather together the

means for furnishing and stocking his expected farm were strenuous and not unsuccessful. The kindness of friends effected much, and there was a little property consisting of sheep and ponies belonging to Dugald which were destined to become his. Old Dugald had never been a saving man. Brought up from childhood under the "shadow of the big house," he never felt any uneasiness regarding the future or fear of not being taken care of in his old age. For generations his forefathers had been born on the estate and had always been provided for. If they ever received anything in the shape of money, it was expended in drinking the laird's health, or in purchasing trinkets at the Inverary fairs for some bonny lassie in the glen, but nothing was "put by for a rainy day."

The winter succeeding these interesting love occurrences was a season of real happiness in the mill-house at Eldmuir. Donald paid them a short visit at Christmas, and not seeming in the least disturbed or annoyed at the news of Jessie's marriage, it was clear that unless he was an adept at concealing his thoughts, the affection once said to have dwelt in his heart for one now lost to him for ever had only existed in the imagination of others. In the summer Jessie presented her husband with a pledge of affection, which was an event calling for much rejoicing and congratulation. Jamie was, perhaps, not exactly all that could have been wished, but the parents hoped as he grew older he would become steadier, and so they were fain to be content.

Having at length decided that Sandy was to have the farm which would be vacant in the autumn, it was arranged that he and Jeanie should be married in the winter. Trifles, however, often upset the best-laid plans, and their wedding was for more than one reason, brought

about sooner than had been intended. The farm which was destined for Sandy became unexpectedly vacant, its present occupants being about to emigrate to Canada earlier than originally intended, and another circumstance occurred that rendered a speedy marriage advisable. Several guests were at that time staying at the Tower, and amongst them Mr. Wallincourt, and his son, George Wallincourt. The former had been a regular yearly visitor to the Glen for a considerable period, but his son, fonder of town life and of those haunts of dissipation wherein most of his youth had been spent, than of rural enjoyments, had with difficulty, for the first time, been prevailed upon to accompany him. Hunting, shooting, and fishing, were, however, in his eyes, sadly lacking in excitement, and he wondered how any one could find enjoyment in this bleak out-of-the-way spot. He had already nearly turned the heads of one or two unsophisticated maidens at the Tower, but such conquests were, in his opinion, "tame in the extreme," and "horribly slow," and he was, therefore, ever on the alert for some sport or pastime which might be more worthy the attention of "a man about town."

One evening, when returning from a shooting excursion, he met with Jeanie, who was seated by the spring from whence she fetched their drinking-water. This well was situated in a small but picturesque ravine, and the stream as it descended from the spring meandered amid green knolls covered with flowers, and beneath overhanging grey rocks which were luxuriantly overgrown with rich mosses and rare ferns, mixed with heather and broom. A rowan or mountain ash drooped over the spring and was all ablaze with scarlet berries, while the sober-hued pine-trees, and bright green hazel-bushes, communicated a charming variety to this lovely and

secluded spot. Jeanie, seated on the edge of the trough, was resting a while ere lifting her pail to bear it home, and, while her thoughts ran on Sandy, she was amusing herself with picking the berries from a bunch of rowan held in her hand, throwing them on the ground, and arranging them with her feet into the forms of letters. She had in this manner just finished the word "Jeanie," and, doubtless thinking of the future, was proceeding to construct an M and an A, though she well knew that Campbell began with a C, when she was startled and interrupted by a voice asking her the nearest way to the laird's tower, and by the speaker at the same moment sliding down the bank to her side.

"Can you direct me to the laird's Tower, my pretty girl?" said George Wallincourt, for it was he.

He was a young man considerably under the middle height; good-looking, well-dressed, and possessed of a comely head of hair, but his countenance bore unmistakable evidence of a bad heart within, of base passions uncontrolled, of innate selfishness, and of self-conceit. Of course Jeanie gave him the required directions, and, as she waited for him to pass on, kicked away the berries so as to obliterate the letters they had formed. But the gallant was in no haste to move, and, taking his seat on a stone close by, continued speaking to Jeanie in a free and very easy manner, as though he thought a man in his position might say anything to one so much beneath him, and for which she ought to feel herself highly flattered and honoured; but Mr. George Wallincourt made a great mistake in thus estimating her character!

"Now, I think I could find the way better, remember it better, and find my road back again ever so much easier if I had just one kiss from those rosy lips, my

pretty maiden," he said rudely, and Jeanie's eyes flashed as she indignantly replied,—

"Go away, sir! It ill becomes the likes of you to be meddling with and insulting honest lasses."

"No, but you angelic creature," he continued, growing more bold and venturesome, "surely you cannot deny me such an insignificant boon. Many a court dame would not have required asking, but would only have been too ready to grant the favour."

"Well," said Jeanie, "I'm not a court dame, and have not learned such manners, so please let me pass."

The young rake was not, however, to be so easily foiled, and, throwing his arms round the shrinking form, would in another moment have snatched from the compressed and averted lips the salute he coveted, had he not been felled to the ground by a stunning and well directed blow.

Foaming with rage as he raised himself, he saw standing over him the stalwart figure of Sandy, irate and ready to inflict further chastisement.

"Lie there, ye southron blackguard," cried Sandy, "and learn manners. Are ye no satisfied wi' fleecing and robbing gentlefolks, but ye mun be insulting and seeking to rob puir folks? Git up if ye want ony mair—git up, and I'll knock you ower again!"

"Oh, Sandy, don't!" exclaimed Jeanie, clinging to his plaid, and endeavouring to hold him back. "There'll be mischief come of this, as sure as fate. Oh, Sandy, Sandy, do let the gentle get up, and go away; don't meddle with him any more."

The Highlander struggled in her grasp, but Jeanie held him until Mr. Wallincourt had risen and sprung nimbly up the bank, thus placing several yards between himself and his opponent.



"You audacious, low-bred cur!" shouted the defeated gentleman, shaking his fist.

"Let me go—let go, Jeanie!" cried Sandy. "We'll soon see who's the cur."

Mr. Wallincourt, however, observing the effect of his words, and feeling that discretion is the better part of valour, made a further retreat; and having reached the top of the bank, again turned round, and exclaimed,—

"You scoundrel! I'll make you remember that blow. You will have cause to remember it as long as you live. I'll have revenge! I'll—I'll ruin you—you low dog! I'll—"

A sudden movement of Sandy's, which betrayed an immediate intention of following up his victory, decided the young rake to leave abruptly, and again menacingly shaking his fist, he disappeared in the copse.

When he had gone Sandy burst into a fit of laughter. "'Deed, Jeanie," he said, "I only just came in time. What would you have done if you had been left to yourself?"

"I would have given him a dunt with that," replied Jeanie, throwing away a large round pebble which she had managed to pick up and conceal in her hand during the struggle.

"Brave lass!" said Sandy admiringly. "But, Jeanie, you ken this must no happen again."

"Oh, Sandy, surely you're not blaming me?" asked Jeanie. "I sought no tryst with the callant. It wasn't my fault," and the girl burst into tears.

"Far frae me be the thocht," said her lover earnestly. "That's no what I mean; but, dearie, you must just gie me a legal right to protect you. And what's about twa months suiner? It will be a' the better. What d'ye say, Jeanie?"

The maiden's reply was inaudible ; but she hid her face upon his bosom, as though resigning herself, and all her arrangements into his hands, and Sandy gladly and thankfully accepted it as such. A kiss sealed the compact, and they returned together to the mill-house, suggesting to each other such arrangements as might be expected to induce the old people to concur in their wishes, and assent to an early marriage.

## CHAPTER XXXII.

"In men whom men condemn as ill,  
I find so much of goodness still ;  
In men whom men pronounce divine,  
I find so much of sin, and blot,  
I hesitate to draw a line,  
Between the two, where God has not."

JOAQUIM MILLER.

WHEN Sandy and Jeanie related to Duncan the fracas at the spring, his excitement and anger were almost beyond control, and he could hardly be prevented from going at once to the Tower to make complaint to the laird, and to acquaint him with the character of his guest. Sandy, however, at last prevailed upon him to desist from this intention, and leave the matter in other hands.

"And now," said Sandy, "I must awa, and see if I can get speech wi' the laird afore yon Southron loon dings any lees into his lug." Promising that he would represent the affair to his master in a straightforward manner, which could not fail to bring punishment on the head of the offender, the youth hastily departed.

It was probably as well for Mr. George Wallincourt that Sandy did not meet with him on the way, or further mischief might have ensued, and in that case no prophet would be needed to foretell on which side victory would have rested. When he reached the end of his journey Sandy happily found the laird alone, occupied

in examining the foundations of some buildings which were in course of erection near the Tower. Sandy's excited manner, and the expression of his countenance, at once disclosed the fact that he had something of importance to relate, and the laird's curiosity being aroused, he said, as his follower came up,—

“Why, what ails you, Sandy? one might think you were running away from some of the bogies of Loch Awe.”

“Indeed, sir,” replied Sandy, “it's just an evil spirit that I am come to speak o', though no exactly a bogie, your honour—but that deevil o' a young Englishman that I'm sorry to say is a friend o' yer ain.”

“No friend of mine, Sandy,” said the laird, “but a guest whose presence I am obliged to tolerate, and whose room would be much more acceptable than his company.”

“I'm—I'm glad to hear your honour say sae,” replied Sandy, “and what I have to tell you will no alter your opinion o' him, I'm doubting.”

“Well, what is it?” said the master, whereupon the young man told his story, briefly and truthfully, “neither exaggerating or setting aught down in malice,” or concealing his share in the fray. The face of the chieftain became almost scarlet as Sandy proceeded. The blood inherited from a long line of proud and haughty ancestors stirred within him, and so intensely was he excited that for some moments he was unable to express himself. Sandy, having once begun to speak, ceased not until he had not only related his adventure with the Englishman, but also confessed his attachment to Jeanie, and, carried away by his feelings, he implored the laird to grant him possession of the farm now vacant, that he might marry her at once and keep her out of harm's way. The laird, who had recovered his self-possession before Sandy had

concluded, could not forbear smiling at the lover's impetuosity.

"Ah! ah! Sandy," he said, "I see now why the pasture has been so much better on the other side of the fells lately; but, never mind, lad, you leave this matter to me entirely; do not attempt to interfere further with—Mr. Wallincourt's son—and you may have the farm and welcome. I will see Kinnaird about it this evening. But who am I to get for a shepherd to take your place?"

Sandy modestly intimated that his brother, now quite old enough to perform the duties, was unemployed.

"Well! well!" said the laird, "if the flocks are too many for him, we can thin them. I know a farm likely to require stock shortly; but this is for future consideration. I may need you this evening, Sandy," added the laird, "so be at home by seven o'clock, in case I send for you; and if my advice is worth anything, marry the girl as soon as you can."

Sandy's gratitude and joy were inexpressible, and though the evening was approaching, he could not refrain from once more hurrying back to Eldmuir with the good news.

Meanwhile an interview took place between the laird and his guests, which, overheard by some of the servants, was said to have been extremely stormy. It resulted in the Englishman and his son retiring to their own apartments, and giving the servants to understand that they would depart at day-break on the following morning.

Sandy, mindful of his promise to the laird, did not stay at the mill-house, but having made them all happy with his welcome intelligence, hastened back to the Tower, accomplishing the journey in a marvellous short time; and it was well he did so, for immediately after his arrival he was summoned to the laird's presence.

That gentleman was seated near the fire in the banquet-hall, looking very thoughtful and gloomy. Sandy stood near him for some time before he was noticed. At length the laird, rousing from his reverie, directed the shepherd to take a seat opposite. This was an honour which Sandy had not calculated upon, and had never before enjoyed; therefore he sat down on the extreme edge of the oaken settle, twirling his bonnet in his hand, and looking very much out of his element.

"Sandy," said the laird, "I am not going to attach any blame to you whatever in this unfortunate affair. You have done nothing to be ashamed of, nothing that I would wish undone; and let this be understood, that I do not blame you at all,—do you hear me?"

Sandy did hear, and not a little alarmed at such a solemn commencement, contrived to make a somewhat awkward bow, and the laird proceeded,—

"It would be useless to deny that my affairs are in sad disorder, and that this Englishman (who chooses to consider himself insulted by what I said in my just indignation at his son's conduct) is my creditor to a large amount. In fact, were he to advance his claims, as he probably may do, having got what he terms an excuse for bringing things to a conclusion, I could hardly call this house or anything else my own."

The laird, appearing to forget that Sandy was present, continued, as though speaking to himself, his hands clasped across his brow, "Oh, what a fool I have been! Ay, you may well frown." He looked up at a picture of his father suspended above the fireplace, and the features of which, in that dim light, possessed a severe expression. "Yes, frown; be angry; curse me,—I merit it all—scorn me, if you will. I have been thoughtless, and extravagant, but not criminal—neither will I be. All shall go.

Every debt shall be paid; every stain of dishonour wiped away. I will retain nothing except my father's sword—never disgraced by a cowardly action—never wielded by a coward's hand; and it shall not suffer in that of a repentant profligate!"

He calmed down, and, perceiving Sandy, continued, in a more subdued and mournful tone,—

"My good Sandy, you need fear nothing. It still remains in my power to make good terms for those who have so long served me, and dwelt beneath the walls of this falling house. The factor has full instructions, and the lease of your farm will be so secured to you for a term of years that the new landlord will not be able to dispossess you; and, in the meantime, take this. It is mine to bestow, and I give it *you* because your father would not know what to do with it; but it is for all the family. Dugald MacAlpine is the oldest retainer of my father, and well merits this at my hands."

The laird offered Sandy a purse containing gold, but which the youth steadfastly declined to receive.

"Nae, nae, laird," he said; "it's no at a time like this that I wad take siller frae your hands. Ye'll need it a', and mair, afore you win through your troubles."

"You mistake, Sandy," replied his master. "There is plenty for all. There will be more than enough realized from the sale of the estate to satisfy every creditor. Do not imagine I am robbing any one when I offer you this, excepting, perhaps, some professional gambler, who would soon fleece me of it, and very likely will if you do not accept it."

"Laird!" said Sandy solemnly, "wull you just tak a puir man's advice, and no be offended for a bodie's wuss you well? You have freends enow here, and I'm proud to ca' mysell ane o' them, wioot meaning ony disrespect,

ye ken ; but where you may happen to gang tae, if you want freends, you'll likely hae to buy them, sae just put the siller in your pouch till you need it, and dinna meddle ony mair with them diel's bueks the 'cairds !' "

A hearty grasp of the hand was the laird's only reply, and Sandy, noticing that he was greatly affected, left him to his sorrowful meditations.

Early next morning the two Englishmen departed. Mr. Kinnaird, having received instructions from the laird, secured to Sandy possession of the farm ; and not only was the dwelling-house comfortably furnished, but some sheep, bullocks, and ponies were placed upon the land. Farming implements were also supplied, and Sandy discovered that in declining his kind master's offer of money he had not in the least diverted him from his purpose. Sandy's was principally a stock farm, but it had in addition a few patches of oats scattered here and there among the fells. These had been allowed for by the factor in his settlement with the former tenants, and the reaping of them afforded Sandy plenty of employment during the month of September.

Meanwhile, preparations for the marriage were hastened ; and, as "all things come round if folks will only wait," in process of time the lovers' expectations were realized by the welcome arrival of the long-looked-for wedding-day.



## CHAPTER XXXIII.

“Sail forth into the sea of life,  
O gentle, loving, trusting wife;  
And safe from all adversity,  
Upon the bosom of that sea,  
Thy comings and thy goings be!  
For gentleness and love and trust  
Prevail o'er angry wave and gust;  
And in the wreck of noble lives  
Something immortal still survives!”

H. W. LONGFELLOW.

NO ONE, not even the “oldest inhabitant,” ever remembered such a day of festivity and rejoicing at Eldmuir as that of Jeanie’s wedding. Although the ceremony, which was to have been deferred until December took place in the middle of October, and thus hastened the preparations, nothing was omitted, or left undone, in the usual proceedings for such an occasion. Jeanie being anxious that none of her accustomed duties should be neglected rose very early—long before the sun,—for she had determined to attend to all her usual domestic cares, as though no event of importance was about to take place. Probably Sandy was awake quite as early as his sweetheart, and at a loss how to spend the time until the hour arrived for repairing to the place of meeting.

The sky was becoming slightly pale when Jeanie looked out over the dewy landscape. The valleys were

shrouded in a sea of mist, above which the lower hills rose like wooded islets dotting the calm surface of a placid lake. The stars shone brightly, appearing more varied in colour than Jeanie had ever before noticed, and as she gazed upward they seemed to fade, and go farther and farther away into the blue expanse. Following them in thought, she wondered if there were people there, and if they were happy? She was herself so very happy, that she could not help wishing that all could share it with her! Then she began to consider whereabouts heaven was, and failing to satisfy herself on this point, her thoughts turned to God—so kind, so loving, so provident for all His creatures; conferring on them so much enjoyment, and whose past dealings with herself, and those she loved, called forth her liveliest gratitude. Beautiful Scripture promises, without any effort on her part, occurred to her memory—she thought of David Spey, and the words of sacred story and holy teaching she had so often heard from his lips; then again she surveyed the many mercies that shone so conspicuously in her own recent past; and when the form of her beloved Sandy glided in amongst the shadows of her morning dream she was supremely happy! The sky grew more rosy, the barren heights of the mountains revealed the sun's approach, and slowly up their rocky slopes crept the eddying mist-wreaths borne on the veriest trifle of a breeze that came landward from the sea. The light increased, until at length the orb of day rose gloriously above the distant hills, its rich effulgence spreading life and beauty over the face of nature, and waking the birds, whose jubilant carols rang through the welkin. Jeanie's heart was filled with love and gladness, and she wondered why she had never before discovered the marvellous beauty of the morning. Ah, Jeanie,

people do not always get up so early as you have done, and a young girl is not going to be married every day!

By-and-by a slight rustling in a hedge close by caused her to look in that direction, and there were the cows, come in of their own accord from the pasture, and waiting to be milked. How strange it all seemed! Jeanie forgot that they did this every morning, and was half disposed to think they had come because it was her wedding-day. While thus she lingered, enjoying her thoughts, and reluctant to begin her usual occupations, a little Robin-redbreast, which had been sleeping on a stack, flew down, and greeted her with a chirp. Perhaps Robin knew it was her wedding-day, so she brought him a few crumbs; being so full of joy herself, she would have been kind to any creature.

The sun was now getting high, and Jeanie, having already wasted much time in thought, felt fearful that it must be getting late, so went in to see the time. The old clock was just beginning to strike six, and did it so emphatically, that the maiden imagined there was even something different, and more cheerful than usual in its tone, and that even it knew her bridal day had arrived. Everything, in fact, looked brighter, and seemed more joyous than usual—the heather, the burn, the sea, the distant rocks, the far-away headlands—even the old keeping-room itself looked different on that auspicious morning; but it was the sunshine within that did it—it was the sunshine in Jeanie's little, tender, kind, and loving heart that altered all things, and gave a joyous tone to each. Then Elsie, having risen, came, and throwing her arms round her sister's neck, wished her joy—a wish that made Jeanie blush, although it was only little Elsie that had said it! The two sisters went out to milk

the cows, which had already taken their accustomed places, where they were; but as Jeanie approached, she discovered, with surprise and fear, that three of them were missing. Three of their very best cows! whatever could have become of them? She looked over the pasture, they were not there! up the glen and down the glen, over the fells, in all directions, but still nothing was to be seen of them! so she ran to inform her father. Old Duncan smiled, and kissed his daughter when she told him her trouble, but he did not appear to care very much about the cows.

"They'll not be far away, Jeanie," he said; "perhaps three miles, perhaps four and a bittock. I should not wonder if they had strayed over to a farm where some folks we know are going to settle the day."

Jeanie looked up at her father with a puzzled expression on her face, but she soon divined his meaning, and wept tears of gratitude on his bosom.

"Oh, father!" she said, "they were the three very best cows you had."

"So much the better," replied Duncan, laughing, "so much the better for their new owner, and I declare, here's the old goat with another present for Jeanie." The goat he spoke of, now standing before the door, was a descendant of the patriarchal Billy, who had been Jeanie's playmate in childhood. By its side stood a milk-white kid, intended to become the property of the bride.

With willing hands, and light labours, in less than an hour they had finished all their morning's tasks, and put the house and everything in it in order.

Elsbeth had next to be aroused and dressed in her Sunday garments, with a new mutch; and having been presented with a new snuff-box also, was kissed by her affectionate grandchildren, who sought to explain to her

what was meant by such grand preparations—all which the old woman immediately forgot! Everybody thus was made happy on Jeanie's wedding-day! Bright-eyed lassies, who were invited to the party, had laid out their best kirtles the evening before so as to be ready, although they well knew those things would not be required before noon, and young lads, friends of Sandy, who of course were to be there, had spent days in burnishing up old firelocks and steel-handled pistols, wherewith to fire at the rock of flax upon Jeanie's spinning-wheel. This was a ceremony usually considered infallible as a test of the married couple's future happiness, for if the tow or flax chanced to be set on fire, discord and misery it was said might be looked for, but if it escaped untouched, the future would prove all they could desire.

Alister MacCrae had expressed an earnest desire that the marriage festival might take place at his house, representing that old Elspeth being very infirm and ailing, the bustle and noise would have an unfavourable effect upon her; this request both Duncan and Jean were disposed to grant for many reasons, not excepting that one which the Dominie himself had advanced. It will be remembered that the cottage now occupied by Alister had formerly been Duncan's; his marriage ceremony had taken place there; many years of their early wedded life had been spent within its walls; and so it was agreed that there the party should meet.

Early in the forenoon Sandy and the laird's head piper, each mounted on a Highland pony and accompanied by their several friends, some riding and some on foot, were seen wending their way merrily over the mountains towards Eldmuir. Before they reached that place, however, they were met by Jeanie's party, headed by the minister, who thereupon solemnized the marriage,

amid the congratulations and hearty good wishes of those assembled. The entire company then proceeded to Alister's cottage, where they spent the day in convivial harmony, and enjoyed themselves to their heart's content.

Towards evening preparations were made for the departure of the wedded pair, and the ponies were brought to the door ready equipped for their journey. The old and sure-footed white mare Meg, which had once belonged to the laird, but had been sent over with other animals to Sandy's farm, carried the bride, and proud indeed was the old mare of her burden. Dumpy bore the few articles which Jeanie had collected towards housekeeping, with many presents from her mother; and, piled high above the rest, was the spinning-wheel with its head of flax—the object of the untried ordeal on which hung their future destiny. But now, who was Dumpy? He was a Highland sheltie—a rough-coated, mischief-loving, self-willed, and almost untractable pony—which had twice kicked the piper off his back that morning, but would do anything for Sandy, and was selected to carry and keep intact the all-important spinning-wheel. Dumpy had singular squinting eyes, so that it was difficult to know what he was looking at, but when he was led out with his burden before the firing commenced, he wore a knowing expression, which said as plainly as if spoken, “Hit it if you can.” But was there a lad there who would have deliberately aimed at the flax with intent to damage it or imperil the happiness of their friends? no, not one! Nor would Dumpy have permitted such a thing, could he possibly have helped it; not he indeed! He scampered about so briskly and knowingly during the discharge of fire-arms, that the flax remained unsinged, and when he thought there had been enough

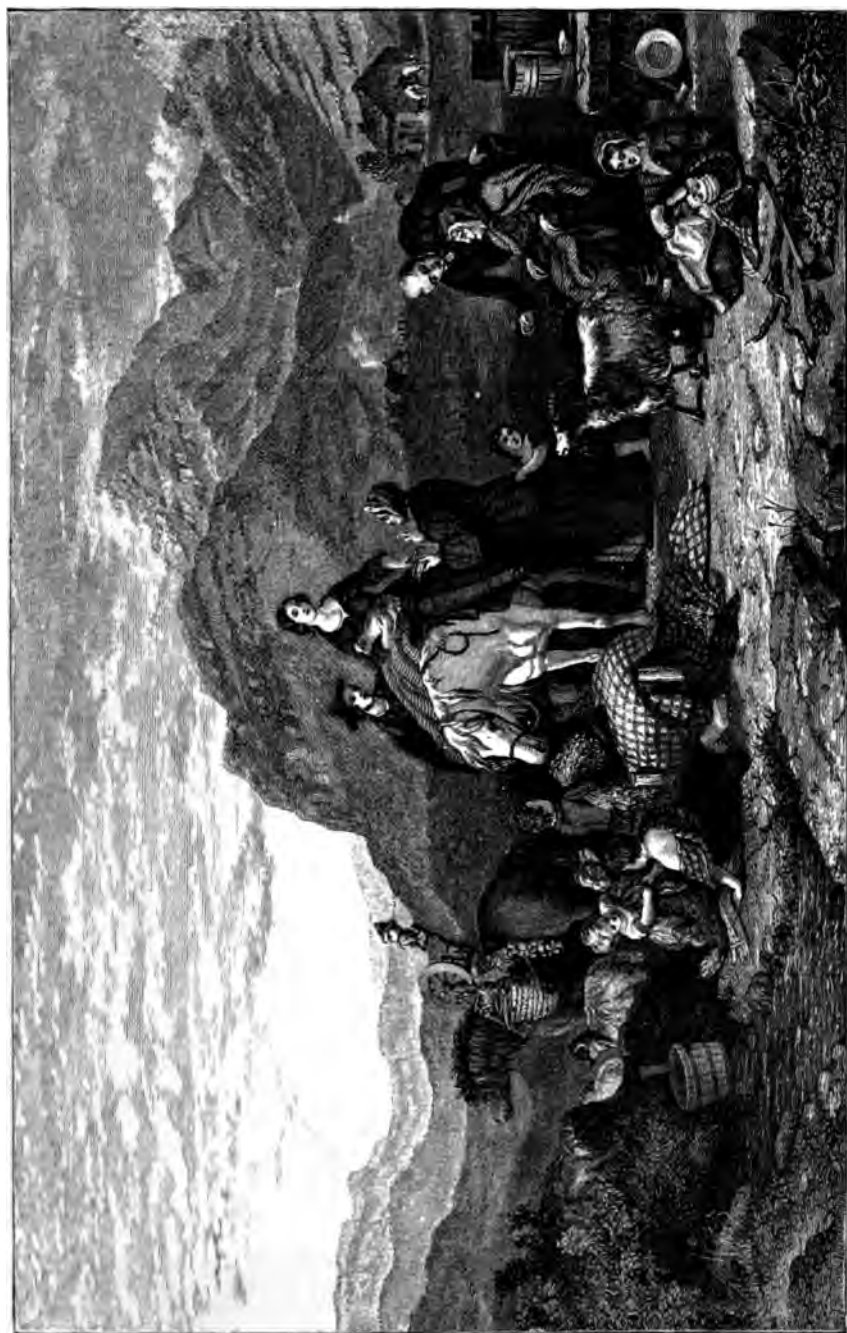
of such sport, a conclusion very soon arrived at, he started off triumphantly, leaving his halter in the hands of the piper, at whom he aimed a parting kick, and who was more disposed to remain with the whisky and joyous company, than to follow the pony in his wild gambols across the heath.

The sun was but a few degrees above the horizon when the bride and bridegroom arrived at the mill-house, to bid the family farewell. It might have been thought they were going away for ever, so seriously was this ceremony performed.

Here they found Jessie with her infant seated on the ground beside their aged grandmother, whom Jean had placed in her armchair at the door whence she might best see their departure. It was a lovely evening. If there was any portent in the bright character of the day, surely it was that of a golden, happy future. Nothing whatever had occurred to mar their enjoyment, and the closing hours of that day, which was destined to live long in their memories, was beautiful even to the last. The sunlight still lingered on the tops of the mountains, glowing in the rich and varied hues of autumn; below, the valley slept in transparent shadow, and the only sounds that broke the stillness were the singing of the burn as it wended its silvery course towards the sea, and the cheerful huzzahs of the wedding party echoing through the glen.

Sandy stood by the white pony before which the children gambolled in fearless security, and Jeanie, seated on its back, bore in her lap the little kid, from which the old goat seemed reluctant to part.

Ere they set out, Jean, bringing forth a Bible, the counterpart of that wherewith Duncan conducted their nightly worship, presented it to her daughter, while in a



JACOB THOMPSON.

*THE HIGHLAND BRIDES DEPARTURE.*

W. R. BALLINGALL.





voice soft and tender with emotion, she thus addressed the newly wedded pair,—

“ My dear children, be faithful and kind to each other, and surely God will bless you. And you, my daughter, take this holy book, your mother’s best gift ; in it you will find comfort under every affliction, and counsel for every difficulty ; and through its sacred teaching may the Lord be merciful to you, and keep you in the way of righteousness ! ”

Jeanie’s heart was too full to make reply, and Sandy could scarce find words to thank Jean for the treasure he now possessed.

The group then proceeded down the glen, and were last seen threading their way across the heath-clad moor, whither they were followed until the shades of evening hid them from sight by the anxious gaze of those they had left behind.

## CHAPTER XXXIV.

“O land ! O land !  
For all the broken-hearted  
The mildest herald by our fate allotted,  
Beckons, and with inverted torch doth stand  
To lead us with a gentle hand  
Into the land of the great departed,  
Into the Silent Land !”

LONGFELLOW (from the German of Salis).

THE married life of Sandy and Jeanie, which had begun so happily, experienced no change, but flowed on peacefully as a river. They were prosperous in their farming, had many friends, enjoyed the good will of all, and everything seemed to promise a joyous future. Their best friend was the laird himself, but his help, unfortunately for himself, was of short duration.

About six months after their marriage, the laird's affairs were found to be so hopelessly involved, that a crisis could no longer be avoided ; his principal creditor was Mr. Wallincourt, who, there is no doubt, had long coveted the property, and had bought up most of the laird's liabilities with a view of obtaining it. How matters were ultimately settled was not known, but one day the laird rode away as though only going on a short excursion, and never returned. Probably he experienced a feeling of remorse at thus losing his property, and wished

to spare both himself and those who would have been grieved to bid him farewell, the pain of parting for ever. There were old men who remembered having noticed an expression on their chieftain's face ere he took his departure, which had led them to fear what had surely come to pass, and from this time the disinherited laird's fortune was a mystery.

Some said, but this was only surmise, that with the small amount rescued from the general wreck he had purchased a commission in the army and gone abroad. The only thing that he carried away with him, it was asserted, was an old broad-sword, an heir-loom in the family, and this incident doubtless furnished ground for the supposition that he had become a soldier.

Either by private sale or in the adjustment of his claims, Mr. Wallincourt became the undisputed possessor of the Highland estate. He was a far-seeing man, honest enough as the world goes, and evinced much wisdom in his manner of dealing with the tenants who were disposed to be refractory. He secured the services of Mr. Kinnaird, who, though loth to serve under an English master, was at last induced so to do by seeing that he could thus protect the interests of those with whom he had so long been connected. Mr. Wallincourt informed his steward, or as we may still call him, Factor, that he had promised the late laird to maintain all relations between landlord and tenant on their former established basis. He decided that no alterations whatever were to be made in leases or holdings, and requested Mr. Kinnaird to assume all responsibility, promising to be guided by his advice under every circumstance. This made matters very satisfactory to those concerned, and thus the farmers and others found themselves no worse off through the change of masters.

Mr. Wallincourt's alterations for a time were few and trifling, and chiefly confined to the Tower itself. One innovation, as it was termed, consisted in his substituting for the capacious drinking-goblets hitherto in use, a modern and much smaller description, imported from England. It was ludicrous to witness the dismay with which the gentry from the neighbourhood, on the occasion of Mr. Wallincourt's first dinner-party, regarded these wine-glasses, by the use of which their customary potations were much reduced. The new laird was, through this, considered "a stingy man," for in those times of profuse hospitality and deep drinking, to be liberal in dispensing good liquor was considered the truest mark of gentility. Mr. Wallincourt certainly saved his wine, but in many other respects he was generous almost to a fault, and the poor people of the "Toon" soon found that the new landlord assisted them in a more substantial manner than had been the case with the former one. The furniture of the banquet-hall was renewed, a new wing added to the Tower, and the waste ground surrounding the walls formed into an ornamental garden, in which Sandy's younger brother, Evan, who possessed a taste for gardening, was employed, and eventually taken into great favour.

Jamie was unfortunate in his relations with the new master. In fact, the young man had enjoyed his own way so long that he resisted Mr. Wallincourt's interference, and, being dismissed, he and Jessie went first to Inverary and then to Glasgow, from which city a letter came to Jean to inform her that Jamie had obtained employment and they were doing well.

The anniversary of Sandy's taking formal possession of his farm was signalized by the arrival of Jeanie's first

baby, who was christened Mary, but whose name, in nursing parlance, became transformed into Mailie.

In the following winter it became evident to the dwellers in the mill-house that old Elspeth's days were numbered. She grew daily weaker and more childish, and as she approached that period when things present and surrounding are beheld almost unconsciously, scenes of her girlhood and memories of the past were recalled with remarkable vividness. Her mind wandered much, and she would talk to herself incessantly, putting unconnected scraps of legends and old-time stories together in a strangely incoherent way. But amongst all her fancies one idea was always uppermost, and that was that some one was expected and would shortly arrive. Her family did not understand her; it might be that the recollection of a prophecy concerning Sandy's coming, yet haunted her memory; it might be that the once ruling passion of soothsaying and foretelling grew stronger as her reason failed, or possibly she really had a presentiment of some one's arrival, but her reiterations came to be looked on as nothing more than the wanderings of an old woman. Often her friends could not comprehend what she was saying; now it was a "bonny man," now a "postman," now a "messenger," but always some one "coming the day," or "mebbie the morn"—always coming, but never came.

One frosty day in November the old woman expressed a desire to walk out. Jean did not believe such a thing was possible, but as the afternoon proved mild and the sun shone brightly, and as her mother appeared very anxious to do so, she wrapped her up warmly and supported her to the door. A step or two outside Jean imagined would be all she could accomplish, but what was her astonishment when with a calm clear voice and

with nothing of her old absent manner Elspeth said,—

“Let’s awa tae the kirkyard.”

It was certainly not far, but Jean still considered her mother unequal to the task. They set out walking slowly over the frozen grass, which crackled beneath their feet. Elspeth gazed around her with evident delight. The blue and almost cloudless sky afforded her intense satisfaction. All nature was wrapped in the still cold embraces of winter, and the peace which pervaded all things soothed and made her happy.

When they reached the solitary spot where the kirkyard had been, Elspeth went straight to the grave of old Fergus and Janet, which she remembered well; the little fence was broken down, but the mounds were there, and on them lay scattered a few sprigs of yew and some withered flowers, the last probably that had bloomed in autumn, and which the children had there placed. The old woman meditated a while by the grave, and then said to her daughter,—

“Younger than me—younger than me, Jean, was she no’? and ta’en before me.”

Jean did not answer, neither did it appear that her mother desired her.

“Was’na Elsie reading aboot ane taken and another left? It canna be me, surely, that’s meant, Jean? Jean!” continued Elspeth in an anxious and inquiring voice. “He would no leave me athegither; surely no?”

“What do you mean, mother?” inquired Jean.

“The Lord Jesus, bairn! He might forget a puir body like me, sae old and feckless; might He no, my child?”

“Surely not, mother. Do you not mind how He says, ‘I will never leave thee, neither forsake thee!’”

“Ay,” replied the old woman thoughtfully, “then He

may come the morn; but, Jean, bury me here, beside old Janet and Fergy, when—when I'm gane, ye ken."

"If you wish it, it shall be so," sobbed Jean, now much affected. Elspeth was quite satisfied, and after once more contemplating the spot where she longed to be laid, turned away, saying quietly, "Let's awa hame, Jean, or He maybie might come afore we get back."

It had been Elsie's custom for some time to read every evening to her grandmother after she was in bed, and until she dropped asleep. Generally her reading was from the Book of books, but they had more than once gone through the "Pilgrim's Progress" together; and on each occasion the incidents related were received by Elspeth as things entirely new, and probably her idea of some one's coming was derived from that story.

The evening after the visit to the kirk Elspeth, when laid in bed, requested Elsie to read from the "Pilgrim's Progress." They had again nearly concluded it for the third or fourth time, and were come to that part describing the pilgrim's arrival at the land of Beulah, and there waiting for the final summons. She had just read the words, "Then she called for her children and gave them her blessing, and told them that she had read with comfort the mark that was set in their foreheads, and was glad to see them with her there, and that they had kept their garments so white," when Elspeth reached out her arm, and grasping the open book, let her hand fall on the bed, after which she dozed off to sleep. Elsie watched by her for some time, when seeing that she was no longer conscious of her presence, though she still kept so firmly hold of the book that it could not be removed without awaking her, she left her sleeping the sleep of peace. And thus they found her in the morning, just as she had been left, with the open book still in her outstretched



hand, and a smile upon her face that no emotion would ever again change, for she was dead. He had come in the silence of the night, that angel messenger so long expected, and she had gone home with Him across the river.

They buried her, as she had wished, by the side of Fergus and Janet, and she was the last for whom a grave was dug in the deserted kirkyard of Eldmuir.

## CHAPTER XXXV.

“Hail, mighty mountain, whose unfruitful height  
Is neighbour to the barren stars. How oft  
I’ve seen the wild storm, mustering far aloft,  
Terrible as raging ocean, black as night,  
Swoop round thee, with its squadrons marshall’d on  
By trumpet-winds, loud as the peal of doom,  
As if it would uprip thy rocky womb,  
And bare thy deep foundations to the sun;  
But when the eve came, with her purple fire,  
Thy tranquil brows, wax’d radiant with the sheen,  
Thy star-crown brighten’d through the vast serene;  
While at thy feet, wreck of the tempest’s ire,  
Pale mists, in listless, lengthy columns, spread  
Like spirits, weeping hopes for ever fled.”

*Ben Cruachan*, by the Rev. JAMES DIXON.

AND now five years of wedded life have passed over Jeanie and Sandy. They are blessed with two children—Mary, or Mailie, born before old Elspeth’s death, and an infant, bearing the pretty name of Ellen.

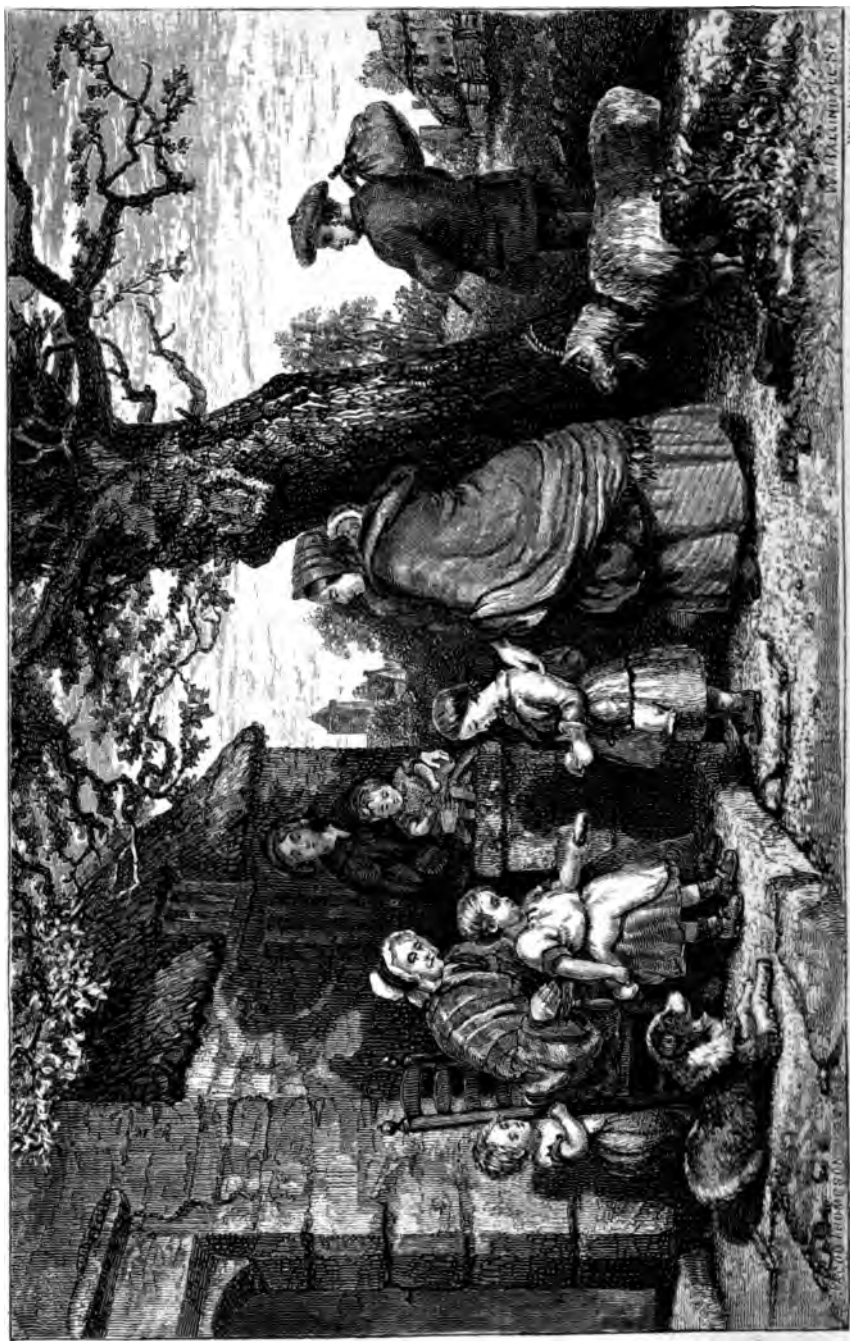
Among the other personages of our story some few changes have taken place; chief among which is, that Mistress Barbara is now left to dwell alone. Her brother, Davie, once the minister of Eldmuir, has laid down his burden, and gone to a better land, but Mistress Barbara herself, on whose pleasant face the passing years have left deep impressions, and whose hair is of snowy whiteness, still occupies the little cottage to which

they retired on leaving that place. The poor people in her neighbourhood have to bless, with much cause, that good and benevolent woman, whose visits among them are quiet and unobtrusive, and who is ever ready not only to relieve their wants, but to comfort them in seasons of distress. She still corresponds with Lady H——, and keeps her informed on all matters relating to the Highland family who have so long enjoyed their mutual friendship. The usual New Year's presents from this noble lady continue to arrive at Eldmuir, and there is always included some kind remembrance for the minister's sister.

Fergus Campbell is now Assistant Master in a School at Inverary, but is expecting to be called before the Presbytery, and enter on his ministerial duties. Allan is at home assisting his father; Elsie has taken the place of Jeanie; Steenie and Maud have learned to read, and to become useful in many ways; and, altogether, there is nothing but contentment and prosperity to chronicle.

Mr. Wallincourt still leaves the management of the estate in the hands of Mr. Kinnaird, who endeavours (consistently with duty to his employer) to deal leniently with every one, and prevent any dissatisfaction arising through the change of masters. Old Dugald MacAlpine, through increasing years, is failing fast, though nothing offends him so much as to be told of it. The old man imagines, and no one contradicts him, that the English laird "would be lost" without his assistance, and that nothing could possibly go right if he was not "to the fore." His second son, Roderick, now fills the situation vacated by Sandy; and Evan, the youngest, has obtained a situation as under-gardener at a nobleman's seat in Perthshire. Alister MacCrae, still hale and hearty, is with his daughter, in Glasgow, for Donald, now second mate of an American packet, has taken a house there for





THEY HAD SEEN BETTER DAYS

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NEW YORK

JACOB THURNER

his mother, where she makes a home for him on his return.

But what of Jessie? Alas! the task of answering is a painful one; for Jamie and Jessie have been long going downward in their circumstances, and are surrounded with troubles. The husband's fickle character, lacking energy and decision, has succumbed beneath temptation, and the consequences have been sad in the extreme. Jamie's excesses, for intemperance has been the sole cause of their misery, have often compelled them somewhat hurriedly to leave a place. From Inverary they went to Glasgow, but after six months' sojourn in that city, removed to Edinburgh; next they were heard of in Newcastle, and lastly in Carlisle. Proceeding southward their necessities became great, and Jessie afterwards owned, that on more than one occasion they had been only too glad to accept the bread of charity, which hospitable and kind-hearted Cumbrian cottagers were ever ready to bestow. For some time no definite intelligence reached Eldmuir, but Jessie, in a letter to Mrs. Barbara, spoke of their intentions to proceed further south.

Jessie, though she never neglected writing to her mother, as far as possible concealed her unfortunate circumstances from her; and, as was but natural, tried to lead her to believe they were more favourably situated than was really the case.

Too proud to bend and confess that she had been imprudent and hasty in her marriage, or that her husband had not realized her expectations, her efforts at concealment displayed considerable ingenuity, while, at the same time, they increased her own anxiety of mind, and it became a sickening task to her to simulate cheerfulness, and to write gaily, while her heart was so full of

trouble and sorrow. It caused her many a bitter tear to say on paper, "We are all doing well!" when, in reality, she and her sickly children were almost starving, for want of even the commonest necessities of life! But Jessie, headstrong and impulsive as she had been, and unwilling as she was to acknowledge that the sin of disobedience had been visited upon her, had beneath it all a kind and loving heart. She bore her misfortunes nobly, and shrank from giving pain to her parents by telling them the sad truth. She had, however, but under strict injunctions to secrecy, been more unreserved to Mrs. Barbara, and had told her many of her troubles. These much distressed the conscientious old lady, who longed to tell Jean everything, and was only deterred from doing so by a consideration of the unhappiness such a course would entail upon those who had not deserved it.

To Lady H—— Mrs. Barbara was bound by no promise, and to her she imparted a full account of Jessie's conduct and circumstances, in the well-founded hope that something might be devised for the advantage and future benefit of the poor family.

How different the homes and circumstances of the two sisters! The dwelling occupied by Jeanie and Sandy, now a prosperous farmer, stands about half a mile from the "Toon," and some distance up the side of the mountain, down which narrow fields run to the banks of the burn at the bottom. The thickly-thatched roof of the cottage is held down by strong bands of twisted birch-twigs, to which are attached heavy stones, as security against the violent storms of winter; and the walls, once whitewashed, are now weather-stained, and grey with age. Along the front is a small garden, separated from the paddock by a rude stone wall, over-

grown with moss and lichens, and rendered cheerful with the tiny pink blossoms of a slender creeper. In summer the garden is always filled with the rich colours of many sweet-scented flowers; but all these, it now being winter, are withered and dead, and the hardy kail holds possession of the ground, and keeps ward till the return of more genial seasons. A few bee-hives, ensconced in a corner, are snugly covered with straw, to keep their industrious occupants safe from frosts and wet. Beyond the dwelling stand several ricks of oats, and these, with the outbuildings, afford snug shelter to the cattle, for the snow is lying thick upon the mountain pastures, and long icicles are pendant from the crags. The sloping banks of shingle are hidden beneath a smooth and glittering covering, its surface unstained, and only dotted in zigzag lines by the footprints that the mountain-fox made as he stealthily fled to his lair among the solitudes of Ben Cruachan. The burn flows through ice-built palaces and arches filled with rainbow hues—its course being marked by a dark line that winds along the valley. The landscape seems almost devoid of life, and only the columns of smoke ascending here and there from cottage chimneys reveal the existence of man. The rough mountain-road is scored with tracks of sledges that have passed; but now no one is astir, and nothing breaks the calm tranquillity, except the roar of some mimic avalanche falling over a beetling precipice, the heron's shrill cry from the banks of a frozen tarn, or the distant tinkle of a sheep-bell. The sun has set in crimson splendour beyond the blue line of the far-away ocean, and the cold, white snow shines with a rosy tint in the rich after-glow of evening; while the strange, weird curve of the great earth shadow, slowly rising, spreads a mysterious gloom over the eastern sky, and grows more dreamy



and indistinct, until it vanishes in the deepening twilight.

The rising night-winds begin to sweep through the valley, and everything in nature seems to show that it is well to retire within doors, where a warmer and more genial scene is presented by the light of Jeanie's fire gleaming fitfully on the floor and over the well-polished furniture that adorns her keeping-room.

The spinning-wheel, that passed unscathed through its fiery ordeal on her wedding-day, occupies the post of honour near the clock—not the old clock from Eldmuir, but one presented to them by the laird. Hams of mutton and flitches of bacon hang in the capacious chimney, and, ranged on a shelf opposite, tiers of round cheeses testify to the productiveness of Jeanie's dairy. Comfort and prosperity are pictured everywhere, and, most of all, upon the faces of the quiet couple by whose honest industry they have been attained. Sandy sits contentedly in the armchair, with baby on his knee, watching the kail-pot, whose wooden lid rises and chatters as the glowing peats beneath keep it boiling. Beside him, on a creepie, or three-legged stool, sits little Mailie, absorbed in the contents of a picture-book, while Jeanie moves deftly and thoughtfully around, preparing the supper. Her sunny, cheerful face could express a smile even if those bright eyes, beaming with affection, were not there to help it. In manner she has grown somewhat more matronly and dignified since the many cares of a wife devolved upon her; but the change is only outwardly, and in the heart she is blithe and happy as ever. Nothing that was lovable in her as a child has been lost. Her devoted care for others, shown in those earlier years, when she planted flowers round the graves of Ellen and Bertha; her tender compassion for dumb

animals; her gentle but earnest disposition; and her deep, trusting faith, all remain—and the Jeanie we loved to contemplate as an opening bud now that she has attained to the bloom of womanhood is the same Jeanie still; and Sandy is worthy of the treasure he has found. The simple, loving pair, firmly believing that every earthly blessing comes from God, fail not themselves to render earnest thanks to Him for all they possess, and with commendable earnestness endeavour to teach their children to do likewise.

Their homely supper ended, it was the wont of Sandy and Jeanie to discuss the affairs of their farm, while Mailie, the baby, and pussy played together on the hearth; and then followed the most important duty of their grateful lives. The big ha' Bible, their mother's gift, was opened, and Sandy read, with feeling and solemnity, "of the way, the truth, and the life." Together they knelt down, and joined in prayer, at the conclusion of which little Mailie, her face resting on Jeanie's knee, would lisp with childish reverence the loving words, "Our Father, which art in heaven."

"Compared with this, how poor religion's pride

In all the pomp of method, and of art,

When men display to congregations wide,

Devotion's every grace except the *heart*!

The *Power*, incensed, the pageant will desert,

The pompous strain, the sacerdotal stole;

But haply in some *cottage* far apart

May hear well pleased the language of the soul,

And in his *book of life* the inmates poor enroll.

\* \* \* \* \*

From scenes like this Old *Scotia's* grandeur springs,

That makes her loved at home, revered abroad;

Princes and lords are but the breath of kings—

An honest man's the noblest work of God."

BURNS' *Cottar's Saturday Night*.

## CHAPTER XXXVI.

"He gave an oath to God to sin no more—  
'Twas on his mother's grave that oath he swore.  
The chain has bound him in its iron links;  
And idly, weakly, vainly, sliding back,  
He crawls again into the beaten track;  
Resolves—and drinks; and re-resolves—and drinks."  
S. C. HALL's *Trial of Sir Jasper*.

IN a story of real life the dark and sunny sides must alternately occur, and we turn with sorrow from the cheerful light of Jeanie's Highland home to the shadowy fortunes of poor homeless Jessie.

On a cold, bleak afternoon of that December of which we have just spoken, three poor wayfarers were slowly toiling along the high road towards Liverpool, from which place they were distant more than five miles. These three houseless, homeless wanderers, were Jamie, Jessie, and their little daughter. The day was bitterly cold and frosty, and the driving snow beat relentlessly in their faces as they pursued their way. Jamie strode onward, half defiantly and doggedly, and the small bundle he carried appeared of little weight; but poor Jessie, whose steps were trembling and uncertain, was foot-sore, weary and almost sinking under the burden of her youngest child, whose fretful wail was heard from beneath the folds of the tattered plaid in which he was enveloped.

The eldest child carried a larger bundle than her father, and was evidently incapable of walking any great distance. The windows of cottages by the road-side reflected the ruddy firelight within, but it brought no comfort to the wanderers. It suggested no home to which they might look forward, and the contrast only made the dreary scene still more dreary to them, for they were homeless! The snow fell with a stern persistence, as though its mission was only to persecute the poor. It fell on the bare fields, the fens and moorlands, wrapping them in a soft, white mantle; it rested on the frozen ponds, hiding the schoolboys' slides, and built a pent roof over the hedgerows; it settled on leafless branches of trees, and little birds, hopping from spray to spray, left tiny footprints behind them; it fell on cities, on towns, and on villages; on churches that were cold enough without it, on homes full of inward warmth and comfort; it formed drifts that nestled quietly in out-of-the-way corners among cathedral towers, and shaped itself into white wigs on the grotesque heads of the gurgoyles, and turned them into hideous old men. It fell everywhere, but with what different feelings was it received! Some there were who grumbled, while others declared it was welcome because Christmas was drawing near, and "A green Christmas makes a full churchyard." Old people said this, and young people, believing them, rejoiced to see the snow fall. But it was not welcome to the travellers, for it increased their toil, it chilled and numbed their limbs, it made their breath come quicker and shorter, it chilled their very heart's blood; and Jessie vainly strove to prevent it penetrating through the scanty garment that covered the infantine sufferer she carried in her arms. The fifth milestone was passed, and its record of the weary distance still intervening oppressed and filled them with sad

thoughts, when suddenly the merry tinkling of bells and the sound of the steady tramp of horses, was heard behind them, and soon afterwards they were overtaken by the huge, lumbering stage waggon to which those horses with bells belonged. Its high, tilted covering, seen through the snowy haze, made it appear a ponderous load even for the six strong animals that drew it; but these, jingling their collar-bells and shaking the snow flakes from their manes and foreheads, stepped proudly and easily onward, as if the labour was to them a mere amusement. The waggoner's round, rosy face was nearly hidden by the voluminous folds of his white comforter, which appeared above the collar of his frieze great-coat; heavy boots and brown leather gaiters defended him from the snow; and, as he walked on by the side of his horses, cheering them with a hearty "Gee wo," or terrifying them into renewed exertions by a loud crack of his brass-mounted whip, he seemed rather to enjoy than otherwise the ever increasing snowstorm.

Jamie and his family stood aside to let the waggon pass; but when the eyes of the driver rested on that sad picture of poverty, he was evidently touched, and with a stern "Whoa, whoa, there!" brought his horses and their load to a stand.

"Are you going far, good woman?" he said to Jessie.

"To Liverpool, sir, God helping us," was her only reply.

"And is that a baby you have there?"

"It is indeed, sir, and very sick, I'm afraid."

"God bless us!" said the waggoner thoughtfully.

"But I'll tell you what it is; you can ride wi' me; your weight won't make a bit o' difference to them," as he looked and pointed with pride and admiration at his noble team of well-fed horses.

"Oh, sir!" said Jessie, sobbing, "but we have no money to pay."

"Never mind the money," replied the waggoner emphatically; "there's not a lad in ow Lankishur would ax a penny for giving poor bodies a lift these times. See, we'll soon make that all right." Saying which, he conducted them to the back of his waggon, where a grating, supported by two chains, formed a comfortable seat. Inside it lay a quantity of straw, and the whole of this snug retreat was sheltered from the weather by the canvas tilt. Jessie and her two children were soon comfortably placed amongst the straw, and the waggon once more rolled on, the deep snow deadening the noise of its wheels, and rendering the motion easy and pleasant. Jamie and the waggoner walked side by side, and the former related his tale of misfortune, only withholding two things in the narrative—his own share in producing their misery, and the fact of his possessing a solitary half-crown, which was not even known to Jessie.

Occasionally, between the driving snow-showers, the loom of a smoky town was apparent in the distance, and, as they progressed, the houses became more and more numerous. By-and-by the mail-coach dashed past them, but only affording a momentary vision of panting horses, flashing red wheels, and what seemed a pile of people nearly hidden in the multitude of their snow-covered wrappings.

"Only think," said the waggoner to Jessie, "they'll be in Liverpool in less than half an hour."

"And we, sir?" inquired Jessie.

"Oh! we'll get there before five. Ah! gee, there, lazy!" And a smart crack of his whip caused one of the leaders to toss his tasselled head and give a tug, which

roused the flagging energies of the rest, and considerably accelerated the waggon's speed.

At last they reached the outskirts of the town, but the snow, which had never ceased falling, rendered the prospect of their arrival penniless amongst strangers quite dreadful to Jessie. They passed through the fashionable quarters, where dwelt rich merchants, prosperous shopkeepers, bankers, brokers whose names were good for fabulous amounts "on 'Change," and clergymen with good livings, yet discontented; in fact, where all kinds of people, having amassed wealth, had settled to enjoy their "dolce far niente," and play at country life in a smoky suburb. Here the snow, falling on lawns and gravel walks, bordered with beech hedges, made everything alike. Here huge fires blazing, in polished steel grates, gleamed on mahogany furniture, oil paintings, prints, and well-filled book-shelves, where gilding and morocco shone resplendent, where soft carpets were warm to the feet, and the heated atmosphere condensed itself on the cold window panes, against which happy children knelt on chairs, drawing pictures with their fingers, and rubbing off the moisture to watch the snow fall. These children knew nothing of cold or hunger, of scanty raiment, or want in any form; nor knew they that the waggon lumbering by bore such a load of miserable poverty. And the homeless ones cast longing looks at the comfortable mansions, but felt they had no part nor lot there, and, shuddering and sighing, passed on. When the early twilight descended, the gloom which it spread over the town was the only thing common to all!

Down into the crowded parts of the town went the waggon, and, after traversing a number of streets, to which the shop windows, decorated for Christmas, communicated a cheerful aspect, it turned through a low

archway, and stopped in the courtyard of an inn. The hostler's horn lanthorn, shining on Jessie's face, awoke her from the brief troubled slumber into which she had fallen. Perhaps it also awoke her from a dream of past happiness to a sad and cheerless realization of her miserable present.

"Now, missus," said the hostler, "you'll have to get down, please." Jessie with some difficulty obeyed, and the unfortunates stood for a few minutes hesitating, scarcely knowing which way to proceed. At this moment the good-natured waggoner returned from a visit to the inn bar. He bore a mug of hot ale, half a loaf, and a piece of cheese, all of which he eagerly pressed upon Jessie.

"Oh! sir," she said, "we are much beholden to you already, and we would not like to be any expense to—"

"Here, catch hold," hastily said the waggoner, anxious to get one hand free to dash a tear away. "I have a missus at home myself, and three as pretty children as ever you see'd, and I'd never be able to meet their looks again if I let you go away hungry on a night like this."

Brave, noble-hearted waggoner! Poor enough, doubtless, but yet possessed of that generous feeling which always prompts the poorer classes to help each other to avoid the workhouse!

"You can go in there and eat it," said the hostler, throwing open the stable door, and pointing to some dry straw in the corner.

Thankfully they accepted the food and the offer of shelter, and, feeling invigorated by this welcome refreshment, shortly afterwards went forth into the dreary streets to search for lodgings. The snow never ceased



falling. In the busy and crowded thoroughfares hundreds of feet trampled it into brown sludge as it fell ; but about the docks and in the by-streets it rested quietly, and hid the dirt and squalor in an emblematic garb of purity. Here lived, "in the back slums," all descriptions of poor, vicious, and immoral people. Mayors and corporations knew they were there, but only looked them up at census time, or when rates and taxes had to be paid ! Charitable societies knew something of their existence, but only because the fact appeared in their books as a great social evil, to be "some day" improved and ameliorated. Orators made flowery speeches about them in warm committee-rooms, where the subject was agreed "to be taken into consideration." But while speeches were being made and resolutions carried, the great social evil—the indiscriminate mixture of population—increased and multiplied to an alarming extent. These philanthropists wasted so much time over the question that those who constituted the population, when first its state was "taken into consideration," one by one dropped off, died, and were buried, without ever knowing how much was intended to be done for them "some day."

To the poorest part of this poor neighbourhood, Jamie with his wife and children bent their steps. There were no lamps in the court into which they entered—it was indeed one that would not bear too much light being thrown upon it—but here only might they hope to find a lodging-house, not better than, though hardly so low in estimation, as the workhouse ! One or two ragged stragglers were moving about, and of these Jamie and Jessie made inquiries, and were at length directed to a rickety-looking tenement, at the door of which they were received, with evident disfavour, by a fierce-visaged woman, who abruptly demanded a shilling before she would admit them. Jamie

tendered her the half-crown, and closely scrutinized the change she returned, while Jessie in her surprise, not knowing that he possessed it, without speaking, cast on him a well-deserved upbraiding look ; for with the exception of the good waggoner's bounty, the children had tasted no food since the morning.

The chamber placed at their disposal was bare and miserable, the floor dirty, the walls discoloured, and most of the plaster from the ceiling had fallen. There was nothing except some mouldy straw to rest upon, and on this Jessie laid the body of her now unconscious child. Jamie, perhaps conscience-smitten, or perhaps only cold, shuddered as he looked around. Giving sixpence to Jessie, and saying that he was going out to make inquiries, he hastily departed.

Jessie's first act was to seek a chemist's shop, where, having described her boy's case, they gave her some medicine, the price of which was fourpence, and with her remaining money she purchased a few coals. Very few they were, but fortunately the grate was small, and when the fire was lit, it both warmed and enlivened them. The potion was administered to the child, who shortly fell asleep, after which Jessie and her daughter sat down on their bundle, close to the fire, and waited for father's return ! But where was he gone ? Alas ! not far.

There is a glare of light, the noise of many voices, and a smell of warm compounds issuing from the public-house door. When that door opens faces may be seen—their owners standing before the bar, or seated by the fire. There are old faces and young ones, respectable, vicious, and dissipated ; there are faces of men one almost wonders to see there, and they call up visions in the mind's eye of ill-kept homes, slatternly wives, and general domestic discomfort. And there are the faces of women, both young and old, ugly and prepossessing.

These have surely no business in such a place ? but there they are, drinking with the men, and entering into their ribald conversation. And Jamie is there, oblivious now of everything except the present. If his conscience was troublesome, he had quieted it by such sophistry as this, "I want work, and where can I hear of it so soon as in the public-house where workmen congregate,"—"I'll only take a glass and come out—I'll stay five minutes and then"—but the five minutes have lengthened—it is nearly eleven o'clock, and Jamie is still there.

In the public-house a blind woman stands in the centre of the floor playing upon a harp. Her child collects pennies in a tin box. That child has a knowing face—a prematurely old and wise face. She has been educated in a suspicious school. She possesses a rare insight into character—this is born of necessity. She knows well when to present her little box—she knows instinctively to whom she may offer it. When the door opens the child reads the new-comer at a glance. Oh, she was artful, that blind woman's daughter, and never presented her box to Jamie.

But enough of these scenes. Let us leave the infatuated man, the reeking atmosphere, and the sad picture of wilful self-ruin which he presents, and go out into the silent and now lonely streets.

The shops were closing fast, and every one who possessed a home was glad enough to go there and shut out the cold, the gloom, and the misery ; and those who had no homes crouched shivering under archways, into sheltered corners, or beneath carts and waggons, and in brief time the streets became deserted.

From out the shadowy precincts of a narrow court came the figure of a woman. She appeared hurried and frightened, and her errand to be one she would fain

conceal. Up and down the street, first on this side and then on the other, now listening by the ale-house door, now speeding away swiftly as some one came out, now here, now there, always in a hurry, but never going far away, the woman flitted through the snow. Her face momentarily revealed, as she passed a lamp, that she was young and had been very handsome. Far too thinly clad for that cold and snowy night, she seemed weary, pained, anxious and shivering, and as she went she carried a small bundle which she tried to conceal under her apron. One shop door only was open in all that street. Light issued from it, muffled figures went quietly and mysteriously in and out at intervals, and the lamp-light that shone on the three gilded balls suspended above showed it to be a pawnbroker's. The wanderer wished that the lamp was farther away, for she could not bear that any one should see her entering a place of that kind. She wondered if the shop was empty. Oh, would people never stop coming? Alas! what matter, no one knew Jessie—alas! poor, poor Jessie!—and had it come to this?

“Please, sir, could you give me half-a-crown on that?” Jessie was in one of those secret boxes, those confessionals, that, had they a tongue, could unfold so much of shame and misery and privation! She had taken the bundle from beneath her apron and placed it upon the counter. It was a merino dress—not new, but well taken care of.

“That old thing!” he exclaimed disdainfully, while turning it over. “Couldn’t give you a farden more nor a shilling.”

“Lord, help me!” cried the poor girl; she was terribly ignorant and unused to this kind of thing. “Oh, for the love of Heaven, sir, give me what I ask!

"The case is worse now, and you know it is, and as sure as my ~~god~~ god ~~will~~ will I take it out again. I ~~will~~ will."

"~~There's~~ There's ~~two shillings~~ two shillings" returned the shopman with ~~some~~ some ~~thing~~ thing. "It's an old shirt like of yours. We ~~are~~ are ~~not~~ not ~~much~~ much ~~used~~ used ~~every~~ every ~~hour~~ hour of the ~~day~~ day. ~~There's~~ There's ~~one~~ one ~~more~~ more ~~than~~ than ~~your~~ your ~~regular~~ regular ~~ones~~ ones might, but you ~~are~~ are ~~not~~ not ~~likely~~ likely ~~to~~ to ~~get~~ get ~~it~~ it ~~if~~ if ~~you~~ you ~~wouldn't~~ wouldn't, and ~~that~~ that ~~I~~ I ~~will~~ will ~~be~~ be ~~thrown~~ thrown ~~in~~ in ~~my~~ my ~~knobs~~ knobs ~~and~~ and ~~never~~ never ~~sold~~ sold. ~~And~~ And ~~what~~ what ~~a~~ a ~~damned~~ damned ~~old~~ old ~~shirt~~ shirt ~~is~~ is ~~this~~ this ~~you~~ you ~~are~~ are ~~telling~~ telling ~~me~~ me ~~about~~ about ~~when~~ when ~~your~~ your ~~friend~~ friend ~~has~~ has ~~work~~ work? Do you suppose I ~~don't~~ don't ~~know~~ know ~~it~~ it? ~~But~~ But ~~you~~ you ~~think~~ think ~~I~~ I ~~don't~~ don't ~~know~~ know ~~as~~ as ~~well~~ well ~~as~~ as ~~you~~ you ~~in~~ in ~~this~~ this ~~your~~ your ~~friend~~ friend ~~has~~ has ~~plenty~~ plenty ~~of~~ of ~~work~~ work, and that his ~~money~~ money ~~goes~~ goes ~~like~~ like ~~the~~ the ~~wind~~ wind ~~there~~ there ~~as~~ as ~~fast~~ fast ~~as~~ as ~~he~~ he ~~blows~~ blows ~~it~~ it—~~that~~ that ~~you~~ you ~~hardly~~ hardly ~~see~~ see ~~the~~ the ~~colour~~ colour ~~of~~ of ~~it~~ it, and I ~~never~~ never ~~shall~~ shall ~~I~~ I ~~don't~~ don't ~~know~~ know ~~your~~ your ~~friend~~ friend, ~~missus~~ missus," he added more kindly. "But that's the way with most on 'em."

Jessie was now shedding tears of shame and agony, and there must have been something in her appearance which caused the shopman to regret his hard words, and disposed him to befriend her. Hardened as he must have been by daily witnessing such scenes, there still remained a spark of better feeling in his heart as he said, "There, missus, there's two shillings, and I won't make no deduction for hintrest; but see you don't tell no one, or, as sure as higgs is higgs, I'd get the sack for being soft. They don't want no soft ones in a pawnbroker's, young woman, I can tell you, so don't be a damaging my character. There's the ticket." Then, turning away with the bundle, he said to himself, "That's about the softest thing I've been and done this twelvemonth; but never mind. If the governor says anything, I'll pay the difference; so hang it, let it go."

Jessie hurried along the street, and quickly reached the door of their room in the lodging-house. She peeped in cautiously, as if she expected to find something forbidding and ghostly there—perhaps death, who is never far away from such dwellings.

On a bundle of old clothes the child was lying asleep. It might have been sleep that kept the little thing so quiet, or it might have been stupor succeeding suffering. Its thin, pinched face, looking pale and wan, revealed nothing that could suggest the probable age of the child. It might be a mere infant; it might be three or four, or almost any age. God help the poor thing! for sickness and hunger have added months, nay years, to its appearance, and given it a premature old age. The little girl was sitting by the bundle of clothes half asleep. A nearly burnt-out farthing candle disclosed this, and Jessie beckoned her daughter towards her.

“Has he wakened yet?”

“No, he has not stirred,” was the whispered reply of the girl, “and at times I almost think he is—”

“No, no,” almost screamed the poor mother; “he’s sleeping, lassie, only sleeping; I’ve got the money, and I’m going to the chemist’s again, but I’ll be back directly.”

“Mother!” asked the girl timidly, “could you bring back a wee bit of bread with you?” Then, bethinking herself, she continued, with a sigh, “No, no, it’s too late; never mind, mother.”

“God help me, I had forgotten you, lassie!” sobbed Jessie. “My heart is so sad thinking of him, but I’ll try, I’ll try!”

Jessie sped away, leaving her daughter alone with the child. And was this girl that smiling infant that Jessie bore in her arms to Eldmuir on the wedding day? Alas!

it was the same, but how altered by time and sorrow! The mother soon returned, bearing in her hand a small phial of medicine and a loaf of bread, which the girl wistfully eyed.

Jessie tried to administer some of the physic, but those close-shut lips would not open to receive it. Again and again the spoon was applied, but all in vain! Was not the wasted hand growing cold? Jessie pressed it to her cheek, but it grew colder and colder—every minute.

From the door of the public-house we have spoken of a man came out. With unsteady feet he staggered through the snow. He paused, and listened at the door. There was no sound whatever within, and Jamie, as he entered the room—all the home left to him—beheld his daughter weeping by the now fireless grate; his wife, in speechless agony, leaning over that bundle of clothing, and upon it the body of his own dead child! Jamie was sobered at once. Approaching Jessie, he seemed to form the word upon his lips rather than to speak it—"Dead?" The mother pointed to the lifeless body, but answered not a word.

## CHAPTER XXXVII.

“Remember that the ways of heaven,  
Though dark, are just; that oft some guardian power  
Attends, unseen, to save the innocent.”

BARBAROSSA.

It is the lot of the poor, and possibly one of their blessings, that in their acutest sorrows there must be no remission of the daily toil. Jamie, however, was so unnerved by his loss and the sight of his wife's distress, that he was unable to seek work on the following morning; and in order to exist, it was necessary still further to reduce their scanty wardrobe by paying another visit to the pawnbroker's. The expenses of the interment of the poor child were grudgingly paid by the parish authorities, and Jessie's heart was nigh breaking at what she deemed the hurried and unseemly way in which the funeral was managed. The loss of the child produced some temporary improvement in Jamie; and when, shortly afterwards, he obtained employment, his diligence was praiseworthy, and for several weeks he regularly brought home his earnings to his wife.

Reformation was, however, uphill work, and the young man, becoming soon tired of it, relapsed into his old habits, and contracted debts which kept him so much behindhand, that nothing beyond the barest necessities of life were ever within their reach. With very little furniture in his room, a wretched fire in the grate, the



poorest of victuals on the table, and an air of abject misery pervading all things—what wonder that Jamie returned to the well-lighted tap-room of the public-house, in which a blazing fire was not the least attraction, and where he could for a while forget the miseries of his home ! Happily this resort held out no attraction for Jessie. She stayed at home, though it was so cold and cheerless, and strove, by maternal kindness, to make the lot of her surviving child as happy as circumstances permitted. For this—now her only child—she uncomplainingly toiled and suffered ; and to the child herself the stern realities of life had given experience beyond her years, and she became a meet companion to her mother in her acutest sorrow. That her husband might be released from the bondage of his appalling state was the wife's constant and unceasing prayer ; and though her supplications were feebly expressed, there was One who knew the yearning of her heart, and who in His own good time would bring her relief—there was One watching over her whose protection Jessie did not realize, and of whom indeed she well-nigh feared to think !

“To the Lord our God belong mercies and forgivenesses, though we have rebelled against Him.” Unseen, yet ever near ; unknown, yet knowing all things, the great Shepherd of Israel never deserts His wandering sheep. Away in the wilderness of a cold, neglectful world, far from succour, strangers and alone, He finds them. He hears their feeble cry afar off, and hastens to bring them home. “God works in a mysterious way”—not now by miracles, nor by stupendous manifestations of power, but by the love wherewith He has loved us reflected in the hearts of His creatures. That charity and that same love which led Jesus about doing good, healing the sick, giving sight to the blind, and cheering the unfortunate ; that

gave back her son to the poor widow ; that pardoned the frail woman whom an unforgiving multitude would have stoned ; that endured the shame, the agony, and the cross—is with us yet. Always with us, He delegates His own power to the children of men, that the brightness of His character may still shine, and that they may follow Him in loving and helping each other.

A single and simple letter from Jessie to Mistress Barbara revealed the truth, and another from Mistress Barbara to Lady H—— raised up the succour that was so earnestly prayed for and so much needed.

One day a Presbyterian minister entered Jessie's poverty-stricken dwelling. He introduced himself as the Rev. C. Gordon, and by the manner in which he spoke appeared to know something of her, and inquired after her relatives. He said that, being himself a Scotchman, he was always interested in the welfare of those who came from his native country, and that some friends had mentioned her to him. He did not, however, inform Jessie that there was in his pocket at that very time a letter from General H——, requesting him to investigate the circumstances of his preserver's daughter. To hear words of kindness spoken with a Scottish accent ; to feel that there was some one who cared for the poor ; to behold in this preacher of the Gospel one whose influence would be exerted, and, with God's help, be successful, in winning her husband from his sad propensity, raised up a golden prospect for Jessie, and filled her heart with thankfulness. Mr. Gordon visited them daily, and in course of time succeeded in gaining a little influence over Jamie.

The minister was sincere and earnest. He believed in the greatness of his mission. He believed that God would seal the faithful ministration of His Word ; that He

would help the labourer in His vineyard ; that to raise the fallen, cheer the faint, lead man upward to higher and nobler things ; to rescue him from degradation, and set him on a firm path, was a work begun by Christ, and destined to go on for all time. When men believe in their own labours, how much can be effected ! The Lord is honoured, and in turn gives honour to the worker.

At the outset Jamie was shy, sullen, and resentful. " He did not want ministers in braw claes coming to peak intil his affairs, and teach his wife and bairn to be ashamed of him." This was his first impression, and it was only natural that he should resent it, but it was not the truth ; and when at last he discovered that Mr. Gordon was guilty of no such thing—nay, even supplied from out of his own means several small comforts to Jessie and the girl, he relented, and listened attentively. Mr. Gordon approached his subject very delicately, but he was somewhat staggered when Jamie volunteered the information, " that he was ashamed of his goings on, and knew their wickedness, but did them all the same, and couldn't help it." By degrees the faithful minister led him to look at his fallen state less desperately, and to acknowledge himself a slave and a coward. To this Jamie could not at first assent, but after all was obliged to confess that, in yielding himself a slave to the demon of drunkenness, he was a coward indeed. He promised amendment, tried, and failed ! promised again, tried again, failed again, and many times with the same result. How common is this ! Men attempt to abide by their own resolution—but where is it ? In the wine cup itself. Stolen from them, they are no longer capable of acting except under the influence of stimulants. Take away the last, and the energy of resolution goes away also ; thus it was with Jamie. Mr. Gordon endeavoured to teach him to seek that strength

which cometh from above ; but Jamie, though he tried, did not yet understand it. He said he might manage it alone, but it was company that did it. He had so many acquaintances who were fonder of idleness than employment, who preferred beer to water, and the ale-house bar to their own homes, which each had probably done his utmost to render miserable. Mr. Gordon wrote to the general, informing him what he had done, and that Jessie was unhappy, and appeared deserving of their commiseration, but that Jamie's case was nearly hopeless. The general's reply was characteristic of an old soldier who had been accustomed to encounter difficulties. He wrote at some length, giving Mr. Gordon his own ideas of dealing with such a man as Jamie, and enclosed a £10 note to be used as the minister thought desirable ; finally, he added a postscript containing two words, "Try again." Mr. Gordon smiled when he received this, but he did try again, and this time succeeded. First, with aid of the £10 note, he enabled Jessie to purchase a little furniture ; and when her fireside once more looked cosy and comfortable, Jamie was prevailed upon to stay by it, and partake of a cup of tea.

By degrees that longing for stimulants wore off, and, though sorely tempted, and often jeered by his late companions, he kept his word. In several desultory conversations with Mr. Gordon Jamie had made it apparent that his present situation was one in which he was exposed to continual trials, and he frequently expressed a wish that he could leave Liverpool altogether. Mr. Gordon wrote to the general, who was much gratified at the turn matters were taking, and replied to the effect, that if the minister could suggest any way of doing so, he would be glad to assist Jamie in procuring a more eligible situation elsewhere.

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Considerable emigration to Canada was now taking place, and some friends of Mr. Gordon were not only concerned in forwarding families to that country, but were also enabled to provide employment for them when there. He spoke to them about Jamie, and the result was an offer of steady employment in some extensive saw-mills if the applicant would proceed to the spot. The general was again consulted, and in a short space of time Jamie and Jessie, with their daughter, in possession of a liberal outfit, their passage paid, and a few pounds in the wife's charge with which to begin life in a new home, were sailing down the Mersey bound for Quebec.

It would be impossible to describe the grief of Jean when the news of her daughter's departure reached her. She knew nothing of their past miserable condition nor their reasons for emigrating. One thought only presented itself to her mind, and that was that Jessie was "over the sea! far away over the sea!"

No one, perhaps, with the exception of Mistress Barbara, and Lady H., knew the truth, and it was better it should be so. In the new life now opening before the once hastily married pair, there was a prospect of success, so that it was well the old life should be forgotten, or, at least, kept as secret as possible from those to whom it would occasion needless pain.

By-and-by a letter came from Jessie to Eldmuir; then another and another. Every month something arrived for Jean, and Jessie wrote now more cheerfully than she had ever done. There was no disguising facts, no trying to appear happy when the heart was sad. No! Jessie's letters were genuine at last. There was good news to tell, and she told it; there was a beautiful country to describe, and she described it: and there were so many

Scotch folks to talk about, over there, that at last Jean began to lose her old idea concerning the distance of Canada, and could then think of it as she would of Perthshire, or any other Scottish county.

In a few years Jamie was, indeed, prospering and becoming "well-to-do," and during that time their friends in Scotland enjoyed life as we have described.

About two years from the time when they made their voyage to Canada, Donald Graham made an important discovery—at all events it was one so important to himself and to another person, that we cannot do otherwise than devote a chapter to recount the circumstances.

## CHAPTER XXXVIII.

“ Many and sharp the num’rous ills  
Inwoven with our frame !  
More pointed still we make ourselves,  
Regret, remorse, and shame !  
And man, whose heav’n-erected face  
The smiles of love adorn,  
Man’s inhumanity to man,  
Makes countless thousands mourn.”  
ROBERT BURNS.

DURING one of Donald’s visits to Eldmuir, after Jessie’s departure to Canada, he found, much to his surprise, that Elsie, who, on that memorable Halloween, was a mere girl of thirteen summers, and whom, therefore, he only remembered as a child, had in the years that had so rapidly passed, become a blooming and attractive woman of one-and-twenty. While he had been voyaging, tempest-tost to and fro across the Atlantic, his mind had been too much wrapt up in his calling to allow him to think of anything else, but despite this, while with his labours he had become hard of hand, weather-beaten, and outwardly changed, his heart, tender and brave as ever, was filled with loving yearnings, and in its inmost folds the memory of Elsie had gone on growing : a memory faint it might be, but still a memory of the circumstance of his hazel-nut on Halloween, which on that occasion had bounded from the fire into the lap of Elsie.

This circumstance lingered in the minds of both, and there, by fate, seemed to bind the names and the lives of the two together. Thus it is that trifling incidents often lead to deep and lasting attachments. But why recount "the old—old story"? It is sufficient for us to record that Donald told his love to Elsie, and became her accepted and affianced lover.

As it had been with Sandy and Jeanie, the lovers were quiet and undemonstrative in their wooing. They thought—poor, self-deceived creatures as they were—to keep their engagement secret from their friends; but though their tongues might be silent, their looks soon betrayed them, and their betrothal became tacitly confirmed. Happily Duncan and Jean, seeing all this, gave it their approval, though they affected to be ignorant of what was going on. They watched, with much amusement, the lovers making themselves needlessly miserable by attempting that utter impossibility of appearing indifferent to each other; for the good old souls well knew that all would be right, and they were prepared at any moment to say the word that was destined to make the young people happy. What a comfort it would have been to Donald, when at length he rejoined his ship, to know that their affection and sympathy in his engagement were secured to him! How cheering the knowledge would have been to him when pacing the poop-deck through many a lonely watch when "far, far at sea!" What a gladness it would have infused into his thoughts, that were now ever wandering away from his duty and persuading him that every curling wave was echoing the name of Elsie! Poor Donald! These voyages were never so long or so tedious before, and when they were ended, and the vessel in dock, it was all in vain that Mrs. Graham made her fireside comfortable, and prepared for



him nice little dainty things to keep him to herself, for Donald was off to Eldmuir! The unexplained conduct of her son caused Mrs. Graham to grow miserable and morose, and to make her father, old Alister's, life so much a burden to him, that at last he begged Donald to have pity and alter his conduct.

Donald, who knew nothing of the tribulations to which his grandfather was subjected, at once good-naturedly promised to amend—and not until it was time; for one day the young man, returning unexpectedly, found old Alister a prisoner inside the clothes-horse, getting terribly singed about his stockings before a roaring fire. Mrs. Graham was ironing furiously, and thus kept her father confined, that he might pass her the irons out and in, and so make him as miserable as herself! Every shirt she took in hand appeared to represent some one against whom she had a grudge. She thumped on the breasts as though there were a mortal heart inside which she desired to crush, and if in her haste she singed a collar, she scolded the old man for allowing the irons to get so hot; and as for the poor, unoffending cat, she left her breakfast uneaten and fled. Next to washing-day, when everything appeared dimly through a mist, ironing-day was the heaviest affliction on all connected with Mrs. Graham since Donald had gone astray.

But now all was fast coming right, and the explanation, though short, was in every way a satisfactory one.

Mrs. Graham, when informed of Donald's love, burst into tears of joy; old Alister was let out of his prison, thankful for both mercies; pussy took her breakfast, which had been indefinitely postponed; and all were made as intensely happy as well could be.

But, while things in Glasgow were being settled thus

pleasantly, affairs at Eldmuir were quite the reverse. Mr. Wallincourt, senior, was dead, and great changes were being made. He was a wealthy man, powerful in his way, well connected, of great influence in Parliament, and one of whom much was expected. The tenants on the Highland estates received the intelligence of his death and the accession of his son to the property with a misgiving. They had never liked the son, though he had seldom troubled them with his presence. The father had permitted them to do much as they pleased, and had left his affairs entirely in the hands of Mr. Kinnaird, who was thoroughly trusted by both. Mr. Wallincourt had, honourably, considered himself bound by some promise he had made to the late laird as to the management of the land, but it was feared his son would probably not be bound by the same obligation, but would raise rents and disregard old customs, and make other alterations which would be injurious; and events proved these fears to be too well founded. First of all, Mr. Kinnaird resigned the factorship, but was requested to retain the post for six months longer, that he might settle his accounts and initiate his successor into the duties of the office. It was on this latter plea that the old factor remained. "As for the books and accounts," he truly said, "why, they could have been given up for inspection any time during the past thirty years." The rents of several of the farms were slightly raised, while that held by Sandy was nearly doubled. That the land was in much better condition than when the young people first entered upon it was universally acknowledged. They had not spared themselves in labour, and whatever could be produced by hard work and judicious management had been cheerfully done. However, the increased rent demanded by the new landlord was unreasonably high, and the farm could

not, under any circumstances, have paid it and at the same time supported its cultivators. It was evident that Mr. George Wallincourt had nursed his resentment for the blow he had received from Sandy in Jeanie's defence, and intended to carry out his threat of ruining the young farmer.

Duncan, too, received notice to quit, under the pretence that Mr. George Wallincourt proposed erecting a shooting-box on the site of the old mill, while the farm itself was to be turned into a cover for game.

As neither of these projects were ever put into execution, and as Eldmuir remains a bare and lonely spot to this day, there can be no doubt that the ill-will of the English proprietor extended to the whole family.

Duncan, though annoyed at being thus uncere- moniously turned out of his old home, saw many reasons for considering it rather an advantage than otherwise. Allan, who was now his chief assistant, had taken a dislike to farming, and was bent upon becoming a gardener, like Evan MacAlpine; then, again, Steenie was too young as yet to be of any use, and, moreover, was of so delicate a constitution that they despaired of his ever being fit to undertake the labours of a farm. So Duncan concluded that, with his diminished family, he could live very comfortably near his eldest son, Fergus, at Inverary. Sandy's affairs, however, gave the family much uneasiness. Many were the consultations held between the old people and their children, at which times Divine guidance was always solicited. That Sandy could not pay the rent and maintain his family was evident, and it was felt that, even if he remained and succeeded in holding out for a short time longer, the dislike evinced by his landlord would assuredly display itself in some other and perhaps more objectionable form. In this


state of uncertainty they passed the spring, and were cheered one morning by the arrival of a letter from Jamie, who informed them that there was a capital investment in the vicinity of the town where he dwelt in Canada for any man who understood farming and possessed a little ready money. Further, he mentioned that there was a report of a considerable number of emigrants from the Western Highlands coming over, and, should Sandy have any friends among them, he might acquaint them with the circumstances referred to. An active emigration agent had indeed visited Eldmuir and the neighbourhood, holding out great inducements for poor mechanics and others whose circumstances were not prosperous, to cross over to Canada; and so successful had he been in persuading numbers to embrace the opportunity that he was enabled to arrange for a vessel to come round from Glasgow and take them, with their property, on board at the mouth of the loch, and thus save them a long and expensive land journey. The receipt of Jamie's letter, and the fact of so many neighbours being on the point of emigrating, turned Sandy's thoughts in that direction; but, when he spoke to her of the project, Jean was sorely distressed. The idea of Jeanie's going away overcame her, and it needed all her children's tenderest care and affectionate sympathy to soothe and restore her serenity.

Meanwhile the time approached rapidly when Sandy must decide either upon retaining his farm at a ruinous rental, or giving it up altogether. The minister's counsel was not neglected, and the matter was turned over and considered in every possible way, but yet nothing presented itself that could help them out of their difficulty. Mr. Kinnaird's opinion was in favour of giving up, and he kindly offered to help Sandy to

dispose of his stock and such effects as he determined to part with. Still the future was not clear.

None of the emigrants on the eve of departure were farmers giving up holdings, or possibly Sandy might have obtained a farm on some neighbouring estate. The emigrants were mostly labourers and mechanics, who were induced to go abroad by the prospect of higher wages than they could here procure.

About this time news came from Donald that the vessel to which he belonged was fitting out for passengers, and was expected to pick them up somewhere on the Scottish coast. A little later he wrote again, stating that the ship would call in the neighbourhood of Eldmuir, and he wished to know who among his many friends intended to sail with them. Sandy had nearly made up his mind to go, and a communication from Armford Castle decided him. General H—— wrote that, having heard that the young man was thinking of going to Canada, he would gladly give him some introductory letters to a few friends of his in Montreal. Jamie Cumming lived near that city, and, therefore, it was possible that the land he mentioned would be in that neighbourhood. General H—— had, doubtless, received hints of Sandy's difficulties, through his wife's correspondence with Mistress Barbara; but Sandy never thought of this, and received his kind friend's offer as an argument in favour of emigrating. He replied to the general, thanking him, and accepting his proffered assistance, after which he told his mother what he had determined to do. While the subject was in debate, Jean had been strongly opposed to the Canadian project, but now that it was definitely settled, she became quite resigned to the step, and even discovered many reasons that rendered it most desirable. Sandy's stock was



sold, and, by the help of the old factor, realized its full value; so the young couple found themselves in possession of a considerable sum of money, and there was no doubt that they were starting under most favourable auspices.

When the farm was given up the family removed to Eldmuir, where, though somewhat crowded, they were made comfortable and once more united, while awaiting the arrival of the vessel. According to the agent's arrangements, they were to sail early in the summer; but so many delays occurred, or were wilfully brought about in order to increase the number of passengers, that it was certain they could not get away before autumn, and thus would have to encounter, at the outset, the rigour of a Canadian winter. To Sandy and Jeanie this was not so inconvenient as to others, because they had relations with whom to stay. Those days of waiting and suspense were very anxious and exciting. Steenie and Maud were sent to Mrs. Barbara, who kindly took charge of them, and, before Duncan and Jean reached Inverary, Steenie was safely nursed through a severe illness by the old minister's worthy sister. So time passed on, and yet the ship did not arrive, and some of the families, as a necessary consequence, were obliged to encamp, as being a better temporary home than the ruined cottages of Eldmuir. By daybreak every morning Elsie was on the look-out for the vessel, but day after day passed, till their hearts grew weary, and they almost began to wish the good-byes were spoken and over.

## CHAPTER XXXIX.

“Sail forth into the sea, O ship !  
Through wind and wave, right onward steer !

\* \* \* \* \*

Sail on, nor fear to breast the sea !  
Our hearts, our hopes, are all with thee,  
Our hearts, our hopes, our prayers, our tears,  
Our faith triumphant o'er our fears,  
Are all with thee,—are all with thee !”

H. W. LONGFELLOW.

“THE ship! the ship at last!” cried Elsie, rushing breathless into the cottage. It was early morning—half twilight, but the girl had long been up, her mind occupied with thoughts of that parting—so imminent now, and so full of wonder how they would ever be able to reconcile themselves to the absence of Jeanie. Elsie’s exclamation was audible to every one, and the mother’s heart thrilled when, rising in haste, she clasped Jeanie convulsively to her bosom, as if the very existence of a vessel in the loch necessitated an immediate separation. All were soon astir, and hurried forth to catch a glimpse of what had been so long and anxiously expected. A large ship was lying a short distance beyond the fatal Meg’s Neb, whereon Duncan’s fishing-boat had been wrecked. The anchor was down, but the top-sails were not furled; and the courses hanging in the bunt-lines showed plainly that despatch was the order of the day,



THE HOPE REVOLVED.

JACOB THOMPSON.



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and that there would be little time for bidding farewell and getting on board. As the day brightened, a little ball was seen ascending to the fore-royal masthead. On reaching the truck this ball appeared to break, and the "Blue Peter," fluttering out in the morning breeze, gave further intimation that no time must be lost. Sorrowful faces assembled round the breakfast board in the old mill-house, and the voice of Duncan faltered as he asked a blessing on their meal—the last, perhaps, that they would partake of together for long, long years—possibly for ever. If there was one present in whose bosom a feeling of joy was mingled with sorrow it was Elsie, and she might well be pardoned, for her lover was on board, and might shortly come among them. The meal was eaten in silence. During many past weeks Jean had tried to nerve herself for this hour of parting. She had sought to convince herself that it was not only right and necessary, but best for all that she should nerve herself to bid Sandy and Jeanie good-bye with a smile on her face, even though her heart might be aching the while. Many an earnest prayer had she offered, and many tears had she shed for them in solitude, keeping herself aloof until her eyes lost their marks of weeping, and betrayed how much she felt. But now that all this was past, the reality came upon her much more heavily than she had anticipated. All her resolutions, all her plans for a calm and cheerful parting vanished at once. She wept so bitterly that it seemed as if her heart was breaking, and her sorrow so deeply affected her children as to render their efforts to compose her unavailing.

Donald arrived, as soon as he could be spared from his duties, which consisted in seeing that all arrangements for the embarkation were completed, and in despatching the boats to a small jetty three miles below

Eldmuir, where a number of emigrants were already assembled. But amid the bustle of preparation and excitement his arrival was not noticed except by Elsie, who had probably been keeping watch for him ; nor was her own absence remarked when, with her lover, she stole away, and wandered up the glen, where sometimes in words—oftener in unconscious silence—the two communed on the past, or dimly tried to realize a bright and sunny future. Their time flew rapidly by, and it was long past the hour of noon when the lovers returned to the mill. A bunch of white heather in Donald's hat, a broken spray of which Elsie bore in her hand, told how, as was the custom with Highland lovers from olden time, they had plighted their troth by exchanging the flowery tokens. The boatswain, with the three seamen who came ashore with Donald, conveyed the effects of Sandy and Jeanie to the boat, but a heavy squall sweeping along the coast caused delay, and prevented embarkation.

As evening approached, the storm passed away, leaving behind only a few scattered clouds, that made the sunset on the one hand more glorious, while, on the other, over the distant hills, stretching away seaward and forming a wild but picturesque promontory to the north of Eldmuir, the heavy storm-clouds, piled up in vast masses of grey and purple vapour, still lingered. There they formed and broke, and again reformed themselves into strange, fantastic shapes of mountains, valleys, and gloomy caverns, in whose dark recesses the thunder still muttered ; while, over and before the sombre mass, ragged patches of fleecy vapour scudded like restless ghosts before the wind, which still raged there in all its fury. The portion of the sky from which the tempest had passed presented a scene of tranquillity,

whose beauty was rendered more intense by the contrast it presented to the heavy clouds of the departing storm. High above all floated the snowy cirri, their innumerable and almost motionless cloud-flakes melting away into the blue beyond; while, nearer to the horizon, fragments of cumuli, illumined by the refracted rays of the sun, displayed rich, soft, and mellow alternations of colour, from the palest rose to the deepest and most effulgent crimson, carrying the thoughts back to those grand creations of Italian art, wherein the sweet faces of cherubs are depicted hovering in transcendent glory around the eternal throne. A rich crimson band fringed the horizon, and, above it, long streams of purple vapour, edged with gold, floated in a pale amber sheen, that almost realized the poet's dream of the blissful islands gemming the radiant bosom of the jasper sea.

Glorious sunsets ever seem to lead the thoughts onward into the unseen realms of the hereafter—onward over the mighty gulf between time and eternity; onward over the river of chilling waters to the “hills of glory” beyond, and still bid us

“Wait with patience,  
Wait till the night is o'er;  
Wait till we see the morning  
Break on the golden shore.”

On the little knoll that had been once occupied by anxious watchers looking out for the return of those they loved, and from whence Jean had witnessed the loss of her husband's fishing-boat, the sorrowful party from Eldmuir were now assembled. A few articles of bedding were in course of removal, but this would soon be completed, and the time when they must say farewell was fast approaching. Old Duncan called around him those

from whom he was parting, that he might bless them ere they went. Sandy, with his two youngest children, knelt at his feet, while Jeanie hid her face in her mother's lap; and the sailors, their rough natures touched at this saddening sight, paused in their work. In a broken voice, at times almost inaudible from emotion, the aged father implored a blessing upon those from whom he was about to be parted, and, with eyes reverently uplifted towards heaven, thus gave utterance to his thoughts:—  
“Lord, Thou hast been our dwelling-place in all generations. Thou art our light and our hope; who shall make us afraid? Our fathers trusted in Thee, and were delivered; and Thou art the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever. Oh, hear us, for these our loved ones. They are going from us to a stranger's land, far away over the sea. Lord, take care of these our children, we beseech Thee. Thy power extendeth to the ends of the earth; all places of Thy dominion are alike to Thee. We pray Thee, be to them a father, a guide, as Thou hast been to us. Oh, be Thou their shepherd, lead them into the paths of righteousness, and by the still waters of life. Lord, help us and them to bear this sorrow. Into Thy hands, oh, our God, we humbly and thankfully commit them. May they always love and serve Thee; and, though our homes are divided by the mighty sea, our souls shall unite together before Thee at the mercy-seat of Jesus, for whose sake we ask, and through whom alone we have a ‘Hope Beyond.’”

Duncan ceased, but on his upturned face dwelt a mingled look of rapture and resignation. And now the dreaded moment of separation had arrived. The last cart, loaded with their household goods, was on its way to the beach, and, while the seamen bore hastily away the few articles that required conveyance by hand,

Donald whispered his last loving farewell into the ears of Elsie, to whom the boatswain had been pointing out on an old map the destination of the emigrants. The loud "Yo heave ho's" of the men on board mast-heading the topsails could be distinctly heard, while the stout cutter itself tossed and plunged beside the jetty, as though impatient to be gone. Brief and few were the words they spoke; more was contained in the silent tears that fell upon each other's bosoms. Jean and Elsie, kneeling on the jetty, ceased not to wave their fond adieus; while Duncan, bareheaded, his white locks floating in the breeze, stood near the shore, watching the fast-receding boat, and turned not away his eyes until those it bore were received into the vessel, and the boat itself was seen suspended from the davits. The clank of the windlass, as it weighed the anchor, fell with sickening sound upon their hearts, which even the ringing chorus of the sailors' song did not lighten. It was an old-time carol, such as has drawn bitter tears from the eyes of many a sailor-boy when leaving for his first voyage, and its chorus, as it rose high and was borne to the shore, fell sadly on the loving hearts there congregated,—

" Good-bye, fare ye well;  
Good-bye, fare ye well."

And now the foreyards filled, as the ship paid-off; sail after sail dropped, and was set to the favouring breeze; and slowly and majestically, as though she was proud of the freight she was carrying, the good ship glided away to the Westward—"towards the region of the sunset," the land of hope—while with sad hearts and straining eyes the friends on shore gazed on her fast-diminishing sails. The golden sunlight faded and changed into crimson; the storm-clouds sank from

sight, and, amid the deepening azure, silvery stars shone out one by one, "Hesperus," star of the evening and of hope, brightest of all; and still, with straining eyes, they watched the vessel until she was lost amidst the cloud-specks dotting the horizon.

The parting had been unexpectedly sad, and, like that from the brink of life into eternity, had been the sundering of ties so dear and holy; but faith never sank or wavered. Even now an answer seemed vouchsafed to the father's prayer, for the ruby after-glow that lingered in the Western sky seemed to their fond hearts an earnest of Heaven's protection—a gleam of joy sent on its loving mission to attend those who were speeding away, and to point them onward to a better hope, a "Hope Beyond."

## CHAPTER XL.

“It is a ruin’d village, far away  
In loneliness amongst the Highland hills;  
The time is early evening, and the sun  
Has just gone down beyond the western ridge,  
The young moon hangs low in the purple sky,  
And all is solitude and silence round.  
The stag can see his shadow in the mere,  
The very reeds, whereon the winds so oft  
Play their mild music, now are motionless.”

\* \* \* \* \*

REV. JAMES DIXON.  
(*See Frontispiece.*)

AND now our own story of the lives of these humble but exemplary families draws towards its close, and we must take leave of those whose chequered careers we have traced through all the changes to which they have been subjected, and who now drop out, one by one, from the friendly circle. Their faces are permanently photographed on the memory, and many pleasant traits of character which endeared them to us remain fresh on the mind; but this is all that is left to us of the generations we have known and depicted in Eldmuir!

Shortly after the emigrants' departure, Duncan and Jean, with their remaining children, removed to the neighbourhood of Inverary, where they settled, to commence a new life in the midst of new scenery. Their



old home was not abandoned without regret, for every moss-grown stone in the place had become hallowed by loving associations, and the graves in the kirkyard spoke to them with the tender voice of bygone times. Many a lingering look was cast on the familiar scenes they were about to leave, and many a sorrowful farewell was spoken to inanimate things as with heavy hearts and tearful eyes they passed away from the old family dwelling. The new home, to which they removed, was in many of its arrangements a repetition of the old one they had left. The same furniture was brought there, and placed in the same order; the face of the venerable clock looked down upon them as of old; but other faces were missing; and, though the voice of prayer ascended nightly as in the mill-house at Eldmuir, other names were included as they asked for blessings on their children in the far-away land.

Last of the inhabitants of this once happy little village, they left it with intense regret, and with a painful feeling that ties had been severed which could never be again restored; but their hope was far beyond the pales of the locality where they had been nurtured. They felt their sighs at parting to be a relief to their over-burthened minds, and their broken spirits seemed to nerve them for their fresh career in the new scenes and phases of life upon which they were entering.

The old homes thus deserted soon fell into ruin, and were pulled down, and Eldmuir became a desolation indeed. Solitude there reigned triumphant, and man, as he visits the place, has no threshold to cross, no home to enter, no voice to greet him, and no form to recognize! Like the grain of the field, man and his habitations had passed away, and the place thereof knew them no more.

In due time Donald, who had been promoted to the rank of captain, returned, and at once asked and gained the hand of Elsie. For several years after their marriage he continued to make voyages across the Atlantic; but at length, growing tired of these repeated absences, he "coiled up his ropes, and anchored on shore." Prosperity and happiness attended their united lives, abundant blessings were showered upon them, and old Alister lived to behold his great grandchildren playing around him. Mistress Barbara remained, and continued to the last to be, as she had ever been, the guiding star of the family. A real friend to the poor, a thoughtful nurse ever welcome to the sick, a ready aid and comfort to the unfortunate and the distressed, she went about doing good to the last, and died, as she had lived, both loved and respected by all.

Fergus Campbell fulfilled the hopes of his parents by becoming a minister of the Gospel, and the worthy couple's old age was cheered in listening to the faithful preaching of their son.

Maude grew up a dutiful and affectionate daughter, and was a comfort and help to her mother. She wisely gave her heart and hand to a minister of the Kirk, who prevailed upon her to go with him, and make a sunny home of his lonely manse.

Allan, following in the steps of Evan MacAlpine, became a gardener, and, by the kind assistance of General H——, obtained a situation near Armford, where the tastefully ornamented grounds surrounding one of England's "stately homes" still testify to the genius and skill of the young Scotchman. Steenie, never strong, never sharing in the redundant health of his brothers and sisters, the "youngest and last of all the flock," was the first to fade away.

In a green churchyard stands an unpretending stone tablet at the head of a small grave. That stone bears the name of Steenie. The inscription tells his little story, and ends with the words—"Aged ten years."

This sorrow alone disturbed the future tranquillity of Duncan and Jean. Their children and grandchildren who had gone out into the far West were contented, prosperous and happy. Frequent and pleasant were the letters that came from their "Canadian Homes," and the parents' hearts rejoiced in the constant thought of the happiness of their beloved ones, and in knowing that all was well with them, and that all shared the same joyful hope of a future meeting, if not in this life, in a better one hereafter.

Thus Duncan and Jean went hand in hand, and heart in heart, down the hill-side of life. Storms had swept over their earlier years, but the close of their pilgrimage was bright with sunshine. "They were lovely and pleasant in their lives, and in death they were not divided." Their footsteps into the unseen world quickly followed each other through the valley of the shadow of death. The parting was brief indeed, for scarce a week had elapsed after Duncan had been laid to rest, when the old sexton dug a grave by his side for Jean, and on the stone which marked the spot was engraven "In sure and certain hope of a joyful resurrection." They went their way in the full light of that "Hope Beyond," which they had cherished on earth by a faith that is the evidence of things not seen, and with the charity that thinketh no evil.

THE END.

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